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'We are one of the few nations on earth who have the military capability to help in Zaire'

Troops will be allowed to use force

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR AND
MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH troops sent to Zaire to ease the plight of more than a million starving refugees will be able to shoot their way out of trouble if they are intercepted by the Hutu militia, MPs were told yesterday.

Amid fears that the death toll could rise to 20,000 a day in Zairian refugee camps by next week, Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, told the Commons that if the objective was to reach the starving and if people stood in the way "then those people must be prepared to face the consequences of their action".

The 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment and 45 Commando Royal Marines, the lead elements of the new Joint Rapid Deployment Force, were put on 72 hours' notice to leave for Zaire.

As Tutsi rebels continued fighting against Hutu militia in eastern Zaire yesterday, Mr Portillo admitted in the Commons that he had reservations about sending troops to the central African war zone.

Today a 37-strong reconnaissance party, led by Royal Marines Brigadier Jonathan Thomson, commander of the Joint Rapid Deployment Force, will leave from RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire to carry out a three-day survey to help define the size of Britain's contribution.

However, Mr Portillo indicated that it was likely to be a battalion (about 600) with additional support units, including engineers, signals and medical teams, increasing the size of the force to between 1,000 and 1,500, or even more if the reconnaissance party urges a larger contingent.

Mr Portillo said the most important factor would be to ensure they were "sufficiently well equipped and armed and there in sufficient numbers to be able to look after themselves and be able to do a good job in saving human life".

His assurance that the troops would be adequately armed to defend themselves came after both he and the

would be handed over to African nations.

Mr Portillo said he had an open mind about whether the mission should include disarming the militia, admitting that "if we leave in four months and the militia is still armed, people will starve next year".

He added: "There isn't a person in this House who isn't worried and who doesn't have reservations. This is a worrying situation and one must have reservations about what we're getting into here, but the compelling case for getting assistance to these people who are about to starve is what is guiding us."

John Major told the Commons that the situation on the ground was complex, the terrain was very tough and there was no clear ceasefire between Tutsi rebels and their Hutu foes.

"So before sending British troops we need to be absolutely clear about what they are being asked to do in detail and the conditions under which they will operate," he said.

The multinational force will be operating under Chapter 7 of the United Nations charter which provides more "robust" rules of engagement for peace enforcement, allowing them to do more to protect themselves and to secure the mission.

The Royal Marine commandos have armoured tracked BV206 vehicles but the paratroopers are only lightly armed. However, the Joint Rapid Deployment Force which consists of 5 Airborne Brigade and 3 Commando Brigade, also has the use of armoured Scimitars equipped with 30mm cannon.

In the Lords, Earl Howe, a junior Defence Minister, said the multinational force could be ready to move to Zaire within a week or two, although he conceded this could be over-optimistic.

Earl Howe said: "It's not part of our objective to be sucked into someone else's war."

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Zaire in crisis, pages 14-17
Leading article
and letters, page 21

Portillo: four-month limit on British tour

Prime Minister told MPs that Britain, along with other Western governments, had a moral obligation to try to alleviate the suffering.

Facing strong misgivings about the mission among Conservative MPs, as well as among several ministers and military advisers, Mr Portillo said it would be rightly asked why Britain should become involved in a place far from home and where there was no vital national interest.

The answer was because Britain was a civilised nation, he said. "We can see people about to die in their thousands, and we are one of the few nations on earth who have the military capability to help at least some of them," he told

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Matthew Parris, page 2
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"These aren't socks — I'm knitting a mosquito net!"



Refugees from disease and battle arrive in the port of Goma. Tens of thousands of people are fleeing the fighting between Tutsis and Hutus

The horror that will lead to broken hearts

THE eyes were swollen like ping-pong balls. The skin was peeling away around them. By the waves of Lake Kivu I stared down at a bearded man of about 35. He had been garrotted, a rope dug into the flesh of his neck, his head bashed in, his arms tied behind his back, his legs folded and stuffed into a sack.

So before sending British troops we need to be absolutely clear about what they are being asked to do in detail and the conditions under which they will operate," he said.

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Sam Kiley, reporting from Goma, assesses the grim conditions awaiting British troops in a beautiful region scarred by satanic violence

camps they will have to wear face masks. If cholera has broken out they will have to steel themselves to the sight of more corpses than they have ever seen before, of living mothers sitting on dead mothers, of mothers tossing their dead toddlers into ditches like litter.

Our poor soldiers will have a United Nations mandate which, I can safely predict, will be weak and muddled. A real role would be to go into the Hutu camps to separate the Interahamwe — those who kill together — from Hutu civilians. The guilty monsters here are those who, not satisfied with the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis in 1994, now hold their own families hostage and kill anyone who shows an inclination to go home. But British soldiers will be asked by the UN to drive food and fresh water into the camps, to give succour to

Hutu extremists who will live on to kill.

The parishes will laugh when they meet the Mai Mai. These tribesmen, in monkey skins and coated with white paint, wave their penises at their enemies and think they are bullet proof. They have joined east Zaire's rebels and have blocked the Hutus of Mugunga camp from fleeing deeper into Zaire.

British soldiers will be impressed by the rebels' front line units. Former members of the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front these are iron disciplined troops who drove the Interahamwe out of Rwanda and are now hunting them down in Zaire.

British officers who meet Hutu leaders will be impressed with their sophistication. Multilingual graduates with a genius for administration do not come across as genocidal madmen. But that is

what many of them are. Our officers will not know whether their own translators have blood on their hands or, by some slim chance, are among the innocent.

Instead £1.5 million was spent fattening them up in refugee camps the size of Eastbourne. The horrors now unfolding were predicted then and are coming to pass.

"Aren't some of these people killers, boss?" the officers will be asked. "Not all of them. Corporal Jones, now carry on handing out the biscuits," will be the reply.

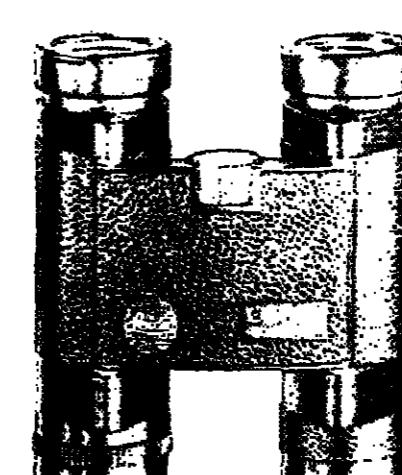
Both men will be left asking why. The reason why is that when the Hutus fled Rwanda in 1994 Britain and other leading countries turned a deaf ear to the UN's case for a military force to police the camps and disarm the killers.

When they call for volunteers, Corporal Jones, take one step back.

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Dons defend their seven-week term

BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

A MAJORITY of the public, including Tory supporters and the better-off, believe that Kenneth Clarke should not cut the basic rate of income tax in the Budget on November 26, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

The poll, undertaken last weekend, suggests that Mr Clarke's campaign to lower expectations about the Budget has worked. His own approval rating is also the highest of his period as Chancellor.

Half the public opposes a 1p reduction in the basic rate in the Budget, while less than two-fifths favour a cut. Opposition to a tax cut is highest among the better-off.

The only groups backing a tax cut in the Budget are those at the bottom end of the income scale.

Neil McInnes, the academic affairs officer of the students' union, said: "It is a great

renewed faith, page 12

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Commander Portillo shows gallantry under fire

Most of us are never more impressive than when we are not trying to impress. Getting on with his job, a Minister is more likely to appear promotable than when noisily angling for another one.

Michael Portillo came to the House yesterday to make a statement on his plans for British military assistance in Zaire. He spoke with quiet authority and answered questions, some very sharp, with conspicuous competence.

His statement, unpretentiously well-written, carried a stature which his party conference bombast never attains.

In response to doubt or inquiry from his own side, Mr Portillo's poise and grasp were notable. His workmanlike performance yesterday reminded us of his talents, and demonstrated how impressive he can be, when not playing leadership games. The less Portillo pushes himself forward, the more he recommends himself.

Michael Stephen (C. Shoreham), confident that the British Tommy could deal with anything the Hutu militia might throw at him, did not quite say that these fuzzy-wuzzies were sure to scarper at the first whiff of grapeshot,

but that was the implication. "They don't have bows'n'arrows these days, you know," growled Dennis Skinner (Lab. Bolsover).

Mr Stephen's implied opinion of the Zaire catastrophe (sure of support in the saloon bar of the *Royal Coach* in Shoreham) was that, having kicked out their colonial masters, Africans had this sort of thing coming. That'll teach 'em. Replying to the former

guards officer, Portillo remembered the Parliamentary courtesies, calling Stephen "My Honourable and Gallant Friend". Carney.

John Townend (C. Bridlington) has the generous charm of a Yorkshire gravel-pit owner. He wanted assurances that the cost of the Zaire operation would be deducted from our regular overseas aid budget rather than the contingency reserve. To Mr

Townend (a director of J Townend & Sons — wine-merchants and hoteliers), a million people dying in the African forest is not a contingency. Catastrophe would be a Budget hike in excise duties on alcohol next week.

At Prime Minister's Questions beforehand, onlookers had noted that John Major seems to be on some kind of a roll. In cold print in *Hansard* today his words may appear to carry no more confidence than usual; but to take in the atmosphere in the Chamber has been to note that, all week, the Force has been with him. So relaxed was Major in his

replies, that he did something I have never heard him do in six years of PM's Questions: he laughed spontaneously during a reply to Paddy Ashdown. "That's just ... bizarre!" he said. "Just off the wall!" This delighted Major's side, who observe his idiom travelling steadily forward from the 1960s and now well within sight of the 1980s.

Frustrated at the way Labour's arrows seemed to be bouncing off the Prime Minister's tin helmet, Tony Blair took to raising a single, extended forefinger above his head, and waving it like a Hellfire preacher as he rant-

ed. On the Tory side, David Shaw (Dover), raised both his forefingers in mockery, aping the Labour Leader.

Mr Shaw plays, by turns, the naughtiest boy in the school and the classroom sneak. Both versions infuriate Madame Speaker, in whose eyes he risks becoming the child who has only to speak to get right up Teacher's nose. This barracking has got to stop, cried an irritated Betty Boothroyd. The day cannot be far off when Miss Boothroyd abandons her familiar homily and, in the manner of Joyce Grenfell, icily declares: "David Stop doing that."

ADAM BUTLER/PA

Dickensian times evoked in 48-hour week row

Santer turns on Britain with sweatshop era gibe

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

BRITISH resistance to an EU directive on working hours suggests a return to the sweatshops of Dickensian times, Jacques Santer, president of the EU Commission, said yesterday.

However, Mr Santer's literary gibe at Britain's fight against the 48-hour directive was undermined by a report yesterday from his own executive that blamed heavy labour regulation for contributing to Europe's high level of unemployment.

Brussels' anger over London's latest feud with the EU shone through a speech in which Mr Santer made an unusually sharp dig at Britain both over the working time directive and its handling of the BSE affair. The row erupted on Tuesday when the European Court of Justice rejected Britain's challenge to the directive, which enforces a maximum 48-hour week and minimum paid holidays, and the Government promised a campaign for a treaty change to annul its effect.

Mr Santer questioned whether "those who seem to say the less social regulation, the better it is for competitiveness ... mean no regulation at all". He added: "We need more flexible labour markets but not a return to the Dickensian

sweat shops of the 19th century."

This week Mr Santer rejected John Major's complaints and told Britain to enact the legislation by the November 23 deadline. His resort to Dickens echoed commentary around Europe this week after a court verdict hailed as a blow for the European Social model" against the evils of unfettered capitalism. Dickens is a standard reference for Victorian misery on the Continent, where his novels are still taught in schools. Mr Santer

did not cite Britain by name in his speech to an assembly of retailers, but there was no doubt about his target.

The former Luxembourg Prime Minister also talked of "the recent BSE tragedy". He said: "I regret that not all our member states have acted with the goodwill we have — gnawing at political point-scoring instead of admitting their basic responsibility. The European Commission did not create BSE. Nor the BSE crisis."

Europe's quandary over its attempts to preserve "social protection" for workers was eloquently demonstrated by the publication of an internal Commission report on Europe's struggle to compete with in the world.

The Commission's Social Affairs chief, Padraig Flynn, won a battle last week to have a section of the study paper dealing with the negative effects of Europe's heavily regulated economy. However, the new version still noted that "member states with more regulated labour markets have somewhat lower levels of employment than countries with less regulated markets".

The paper cited Europe's well-known burden of high labour costs compared with its main competitors but it skirted around the working-time argument. Although Europeans worked far shorter hours than Japanese or Americans, this was not "important" in causing inflexibility. Europe's problem stemmed from obstacles to work at night and weekends, which meant that factories were underused and many shops and services were open only during working hours.

Blair warns Chirac, page 12

EMU moves will destroy Tory party, says Tebbit

LORD TEBBIT gave a warning to John Major last night that a move towards monetary union would destroy the Conservative Party.

In his most scathing criticism of the stance on the single currency, the former party chairman told the Prime Minister he must leave to it other parties to tell the right-wing Conservative 2000 group.

Ministers came under cross-party criticism last night after blocking moves for a Commons debate on plans for a single currency.

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US media sees chat-show publicity blitz as 'Britain's most unwelcome export since mad cow disease'

America sticks the knife into the Duchess of York

By QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK AND EMMA WILKINS

THE Duchess of York hit a cold Manhattan yesterday on the latest leg of a self-publicity tour, only to be told that she was "Britain's most unwelcome export since mad cow disease".

It was not only winter's first snow flurries that chilled the air. The local media suddenly wearied of her, failing to show any gratitude for the duchess's statement this week that she loves America and wants to live there.

The duchess, who is touring the United States to promote a book and rebuild her reputation, wore a skirt slit to the thigh as she swept into a Fifth Avenue bookshop to sign copies of her children's story.

At the same time, a television network was debating "Is Fergie a royal pain?" and the *New York Post* was carrying a vitriolic attack headlined "America, it's time to dump royal pain Fergie".

"Someone ought to tell Fergie that America no longer needs foreign royalty," it thundered. "Change the Channel. Don't buy her tell-all book."

The Duke of York's former wife crossed the Atlantic apparently believing that it would do her good to adopt the American habits of public self-analysis and soul-baring. She has appeared before the grand

queens of broadcasting, Oprah Winfrey and Diane Sawyer and engaged in the dubious practice of seeking to shrive herself on the shimmering small screen to tens of millions of Americans. Yesterday's barrage suggested that the scheme was a failure.

Her friend-turned-enemy, Allan Starkie, was in New York at the same time, hawking his sordid version of the Fergie story. Dr Starkie, from Long Island, offered poisonous indiscretions that threatened to tarnish further the duchess's name.

None of it boded well for the final negotiations she is conducting with Weight Watchers, the dieting organisation, for which she hopes to become a front woman in exchange for \$1 million.

The duchess's desire to present herself as an ordinary Joan with human failings have made it an embarrassment to be a Briton abroad.

Interrogated by Diane Sawyer on the nationwide ABC network, the duchess threw her face into contortions of suffering as she described her life at Buckingham Palace.

Throughout her meanderings she has praised the conduct of the Duke of York. For all the good intentions, however, the result has still



My Story: the tell-all book by the Duchess

been negative. Reporters concentrated merely on her denial that the Duke was homosexual, and portrayed the Queen's second son as little more than a dandified who-watches too much television.

Amid the ghastly circus, however, one possible boon presented itself yesterday. The *New York Post* polemicist Andrea Peyer, made such a robust attack on "former royals who would sell out Buckingham Palace for a buck" that it is possible the monarchy may yet benefit, simply by being betrayed.

In Britain, in an interview on Radio 4's *Today* pro-

gramme yesterday, the duchess pointedly avoided a question about her fidelity to her husband during their marriage. She said that the issue was "not relevant" to the interview.

She did choose, however, to declare her intention to repay debts estimated at £4 million to Coutts, her bankers. Comparing her addiction to spending money with her sister-in-law's bulimia, the duchess said she had now conquered her desire to lead a lavish lifestyle.

Motherhood was probably her only success, she said. "The only thing I can probably say I am good at is being a mother," she told Sue McGregor, her interviewer.

The duchess said that after the embarrassing publication of photographs of her toes being sucked by John Bryan, it was only her religious faith that sustained her.

Brushing aside suggestions that she had received "dressing-downs" from the Queen, the duchess said: "I would like to think that Her Majesty is grandmother to my two, to our two children, and therefore we carry on that relationship."

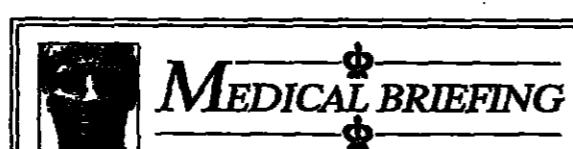
Her book, meanwhile, was being sold by Dr Starkie's account even in Britain. But bookshops expect that to change as the publicity blitz takes effect.

The temptations she cannot resist

THE Duchess of York is unfortunate in that her personality is likely to lead her all her life into social, financial and sexual scrapes of varying magnitude. They probably stem from a condition which is labelled "failure of impulse control".

During her interviews yesterday the duchess expressed regret for the difficulties she has caused others, but classically seemed to be emotionally detached. The magnitude of the disasters she had occasioned did not seem to be causing severe anxiety.

Her present preoccupations not unnaturally centre on her debts, which she says have slipped all too easily



Dr Thomas Stuttaford

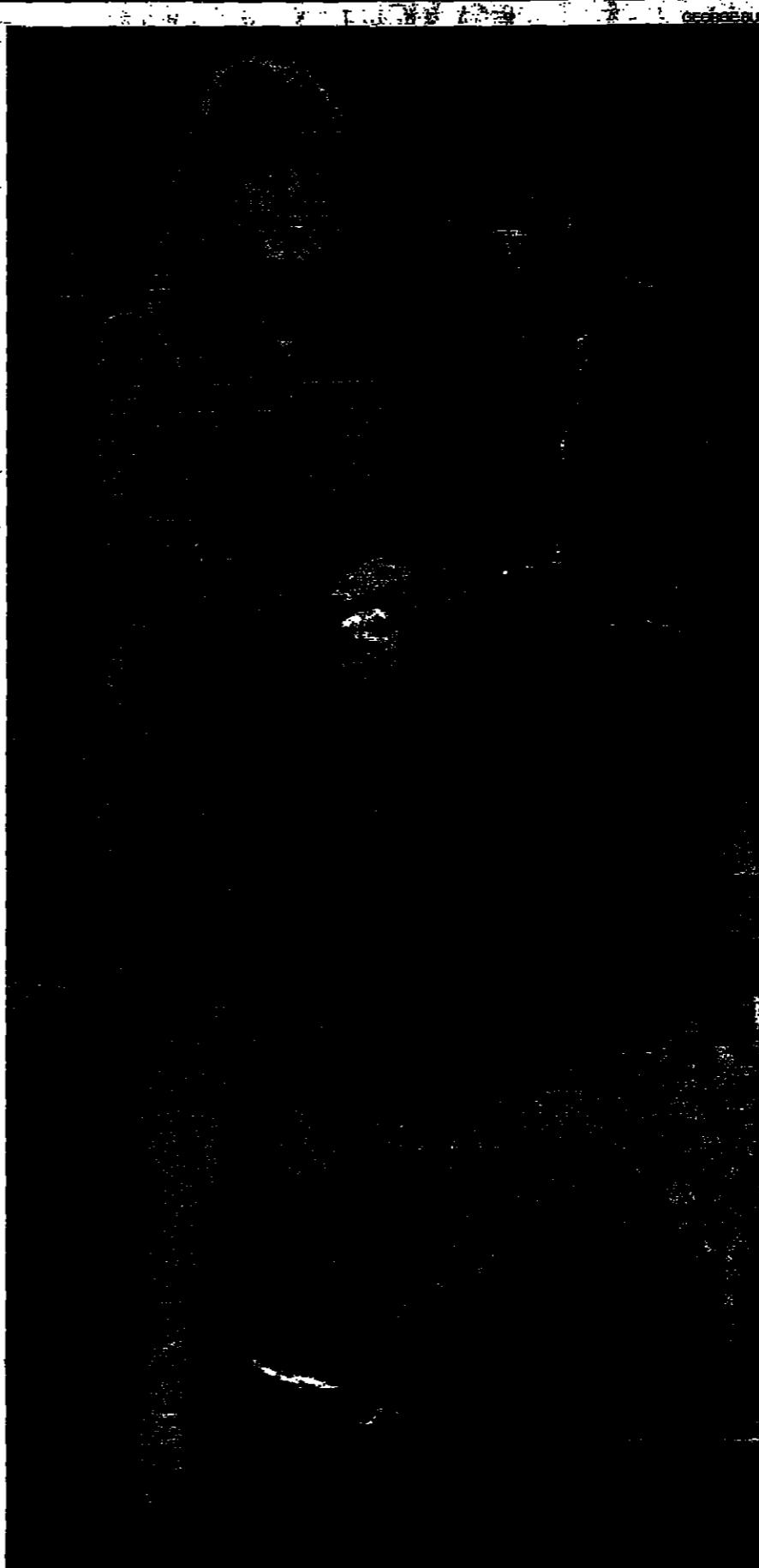
from six to seven figures. The size of the debt can be attributed to her buying and spending sprees; they are not so much a matter of immaturity, as some people display that trait all their lives.

In other people, the same personality defect of failure of impulse control leads to pathological gambling, con-

nesc will trigger another bout of buying or spending, and the cycle is repeated.

Disorders of impulse control are often very much part of a wider picture and of difficulties with personal relationships. As with any personality disorder, treatment is difficult. As the duchess herself says, her troubles may well have been lain down in childhood when her home life was fractured.

The duchess's principal concern now is for her children, and there is every reason to suppose that she will be a devoted mother. But no blinding flash on the road to Damascus will ever turn her into an astute banker or nun.



On air: the Duchess with the television chat-show host Oprah Winfrey. The charm offensive does not seem to have helped her or her book in America

Drunk is jailed for midair mayhem

By RICHARD DUKE
AND HARVEY ELLIOTT



Viscount drove over limit after lover died

By MIKE HORNELL

VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH, heir to the Marquess of Bath, was banned from driving for 18 months yesterday and fined £500 after he was stopped while almost three times over the drink-drive limit.

The viscount, charged in the name of Cearlin Henry Thynn, had been upset at the death of his girlfriend, Scarie Kirby, 29, in a bomb attack in India six months earlier.

Horseferry Road magistrates in London were told. He was injured in the explosion at a backpackers' hostel in New Delhi. When his Alfa Romeo was stopped by police after he went through a red light in Kensington, he had been thinking about his girlfriend and his best friend, both killed in the blast last April, the court was told.

Viscount Weymouth, 22, who gave his address as Longleat House near Wiltshire, had gone out in October on the eve of what would have been Miss Kirby's birthday. He was said to be unemployed and living on £46-a-week benefit. He was ordered to pay £50 costs.

Jailing James Mullally for two years, Judge Ensor said he regretted that it was the most he could impose on Mullally, 37, from Florida. Manchester Crown Court was told that Mullally became violent after a four-hour drinking binge on the flight from Orlando to Manchester last month. He had been drinking against medical advice after taking a course of anti-depressants.

Cabin staff were so alarmed that the captain ordered the flightdeck doors to be locked. After struggling with other passengers, Mullally was subdued only when a British holidaymaker punched him twice in the face. Mullally, of Palm Coast, admitted endangering aircraft and safety and being drunk on board an aircraft. He had been on his way to a job interview with

immigration authorities in Dublin.

Rick Holland, for the prosecution, said Mullally, who was sitting beside a US Marine, had continued drinking through his first meal and made a number of trips to the front of the aircraft to get more alcohol. He then began marching up and down the aisle, swearing, clenching his fists and talking about God.

The judge ordered that Paul Hogan, 34, the man who eventually immobilised him with a punch, should receive a £50 award from public funds in gratitude for his actions. Mr Hogan, 34, a car salesman from Bradford, west Yorkshire, was on the plane with his family.

Airline spokesmen said yesterday that there was no need to change their policy on serving alcohol.

Raucous rooster lands its owner in Dublin prison

By AUDREY MAGEE, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A CLAMOROUS campaign is afoot to free a woman jailed in Dublin for refusing to restrain her boisterous rooster.

Moira Gallagher, 62, of Co Mayo, has spent the past 11 days in Mountjoy prison because she refused a court order to silence her crowing cockerel. The arguments with her neighbours in Achill began three years ago after the rooster, Cuader, uprooted a hedge. Mrs Gallagher refused to get rid of the bird or to build a wall to keep it from wandering.

Peter Masterson's neighbouring house, irritating him with its incessant crowing. Last July, he started a civil action against Mrs Gallagher.

The Castlebar Circuit Court ordered her to build a 6ft high wall. She refused. Last month she was again brought before the courts and told to pay Mr Masterson £4,000 compensation or build the wall. She refused both, was held in contempt and sentenced to indefinite detention in Mountjoy prison in Dublin.

Friends and relatives are

protesting outside the prison gates, demanding her release. Her son Tommy, 23, said roosters crowded by nature. "It's a farce. She should not have been sent to prison. People who get done for murder and drugs are still out."

The main opposition party, Fianna Fail, says Mrs Gallagher should be freed on compassionate grounds. The party's law reform spokesman, Willie O'Dea, said yesterday that the case was absurd and that the law of

Express man's wife arrested over book

A NEWSPAPER executive's wife was arrested after a woman allegedly tried to sell a stolen copy of a controversial biography about the Duchess of York to journalists.

Anita Monk, 52, the Dutch-born wife of Ian Monk, deputy editor of *The Express*, was arrested at a Heathrow hotel on November 1 by police posing as reporters. The duchess tried to ban the 224-page biography, *Fergie: Her Secret Life*, by Allan Starkie, because it disclosed embarrassing details of her affairs with the Americans John Bryan and Steve Wyatt.

The book was printed in America and Finland under strict secrecy and bought for £10,000 by the *Daily Mail*. Unknown to the *Mail*, a rough copy had found its way to *The Express*. The *Sun* was allegedly contacted on November 1 by a woman who asked £4,000 to hand over a copy of the biography at the Excelsior Hotel, Heathrow.

The woman refused to give her name but told *The Sun* she had obtained the copy from Finland. *The Sun* informed the publisher, Michael O'Mara. The woman was told that reporters would meet her. Metropolitan Police officers arrived and arrested Mrs Monk. Officers seized an unbound prepublication copy of the biography and a search of her home in Fulmer, Buckinghamshire, uncovered another, it is alleged. Mrs Monk was taken to Uxbridge police station and bailed to return on Monday.

Mr Monk's future at *The Express* was unclear yesterday. He was in his office but not available for comment. Richard Addis, Editor of *The Express*, said only: "How distressing for Mr Monk that everyone now knows his wife is 52."

Mr O'Mara's lawyers sought undertakings from *The Express* that it would not run unauthorised excerpts. The paper ran extracts over three pages and an opinion column condemning the book.

A woman was arrested in Finland for trying to sell page proofs to another tabloid.

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BBC announces plan to scrap television quiz show that became a national institution

After 25 years, Mastermind has come to the final pass

By CAROL MIDDLETON

TWENTY-FIVE years after it started with a question about a Picasso painting, *Mastermind* is to finish. The television quiz show which fed the voracious British appetite for factual knowledge will close after its next series in 1997.

The presenter Magnus Magnusson, an Icelandic-born archaeology expert who brought an air of scholarly gravitas to the interrogation process, admitted he was disappointed by the BBC's decision that the programme had been "drawing to the end of its natural life".

But he said: "Every good thing has to come to an end, and I would rather it ended with a bang than whimper. We will be retiring from the scene when we are still on the crest, and I shall treat the last series as a celebration of 25 splendid and enjoyable years."

"It has been a tremendous privilege to be part of a programme which has become legendary in the annals of quiz programmes. I have started and now it is time to finish."

More than 1,400 contestants have sat in the black chair answering questions on specialist subjects ranging from occupational pensions, to famous burial grounds of London, to the Sex Pistols.

Competition has been fierce. One contestant tried to unnerve rivals by completing *The Times* crossword in four minutes; he had memorised the answers. Another bought a replica *Mastermind* chair, ordered his son to operate an Anglepoise lamp and demanded his wife ask him questions every night for a week before his appearance.

When the first programme was broadcast on September 11, 1972, from Liverpool University, accompanied by the title music called *Approaching Menace*, it was described as a quirky, one-off show for insomniac academics. But it quickly became a national institution, paving the way for pub quizzes and board games such as Trivial Pursuit. At its height in the mid-1980s, it had



Magnusson, top left, said of his record-breaking run: "I have started so I will finish." Above, taxi driver Fred Housego celebrating his 1980 win with his family

20 million viewers, and it still attracts 6 million.

Magnusson's catchphrases — "I've started so I'll finish," "You passed on three," and "Stop the clock" — became part of the vernacular. Its simple, yet compelling, format of a specialist questions round

HOW THEY STARTED...

Have the *Mastermind* questions become easier or more difficult? Here is a sample of general knowledge questions from the first series and the latest.

1 What author did Hitler and Mussolini acclaim as the master prophet of right-wing authoritarianism?
2 He provoked the Third Crusade by capturing Jerusalem in 1187. Who is he?
3 A member of the family Alaudidae, Wordsworth wrote a poem in its praise. What was it?
4 What fortunate discovery was made by Jacobus Jonker in 1934?
5 In the ancient world what name was given to the five regular solid figures?

Answers — 1, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche; 2, Saladin; 3, a skylark; 4, a large diamond; 5, Platonic solids.

AND HOW THEY FINISHED

1 Violet is at one end of the visible spectrum. What colour is at the other end?
2 What name is usually given to the tax imposed in Anglo-Saxon times to provide funds for the protection of England from the Vikings?
3 In Shakespeare, who is warned to beware jealousy? "The green-eyed monster which doth mock/The meat it feeds on!"
4 In the Old Testament, who was stoned to death after he refused to sell his vineyard to King Ahab?
5 Which mercantile league of north German towns dominated the Baltic and North Sea trade from the 13th to the 15th century?

Answers: 1, Red; 2, Danegeld (also galor, heregeld or geld); 3, Othello; 4, Naboth; 5, Hanseatic League or Hanse (German — Hanse).

followed by a high-pressure general knowledge test became compulsive viewing for many. The first question was on the visual arts. It asked: "Picasso's *Guernica* was a protest about the bombing by Spanish planes of a village. In what year did the event take

place that inspired the painting?" The answer was 1937. Magnusson, 66, said that question would now fall under general knowledge because the idea of general knowledge had "broadened hugely" since 1972. The highest-ever specialist score is 22, achieved by a

helicopter pilot, Joe West, in 1979. He answered questions on Nelson. The highest general knowledge score is also 22, achieved by Jennifer Keaveney in 1986. The highest combined total is 41, scored by Kevin Ashman last year.

Winners of the Caithness glass trophy have ranged from diplomats, a cleric, and teachers to taxi and train drivers. Perhaps the most well-known, London cabbie Fred Housego, became a broadcasting celebrity after his 1980 victory.

Thousands of people have applied to go under the spotlight. Some specialist subjects were considered too obscure: they included orthopaedic bone cement in total hip replacement and routes to anywhere in mainland Britain from Letchworth by road.

By the time Magnusson bows out, he will equal the record for the longest-serving host of a continuously running quiz show on British television, set by the *University Challenge* presenter Bamber Gascoigne. Magnusson is currently writing his memoirs about the show.

The show's creator, BBC producer Bill Wright, died in 1981. The BBC, which owns the copyright to the format, is now promising to develop new ideas for quiz shows to take the *Mastermind* tradition into the future. There are no plans to sell the format.

Corporation executives paid tribute to Magnusson yesterday. The BBC controller Michael Jackson said: "His eloquence has become a by-word in television."

John Whiston, the head of youth and entertainment features, said: "The success of *Mastermind* is due in large part to Magnusson's inspirational stewardship. There are very few broadcasters who can match his contribution to the BBC for quality and consistency; let alone longevity, and the BBC owes him a deep debt of gratitude."

The corporation has pledged a special documentary and a spectacular final to mark *Mastermind's* demise.

Leading article, page 21



Secrets of hot-seat

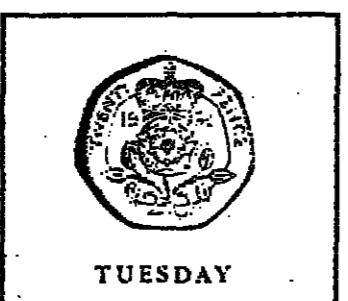
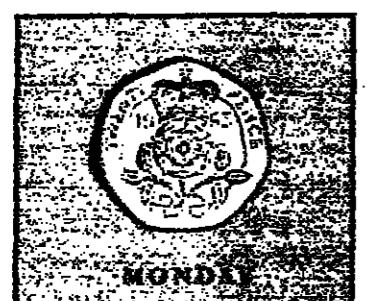
THE black leather chair and the spotlight which became the symbols of *Mastermind* were designed to recreate the atmosphere of a wartime interrogation. Bill Wright, a former prisoner of war who devised the show's format, wanted contestants to feel they were being grilled under the heat of the spotlight.

Between filming, the main chair is kept in case of emergencies; the same original model has been used since 1972, transported around the country by lorry. The duplicate chair has been used in the opening titles and for sketches on

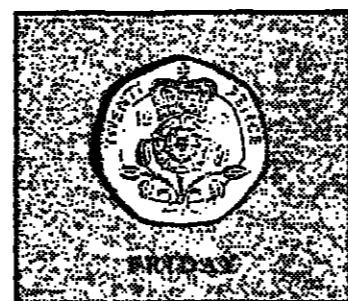
back with no money changing hands.

Although Magnusson has always avoided it, he may be forced to sit in the chair for the first time as part of the programme's finale next year. Under the famous spotlight, he is expected to be asked questions on his 25 years as quizmaster by former contestants in a last act of revenge.

Magnusson suggested last night that the BBC should present him with the chair as a "permanent memento of 25 of the happiest years of my life. I would like to put it out to grass in my study."



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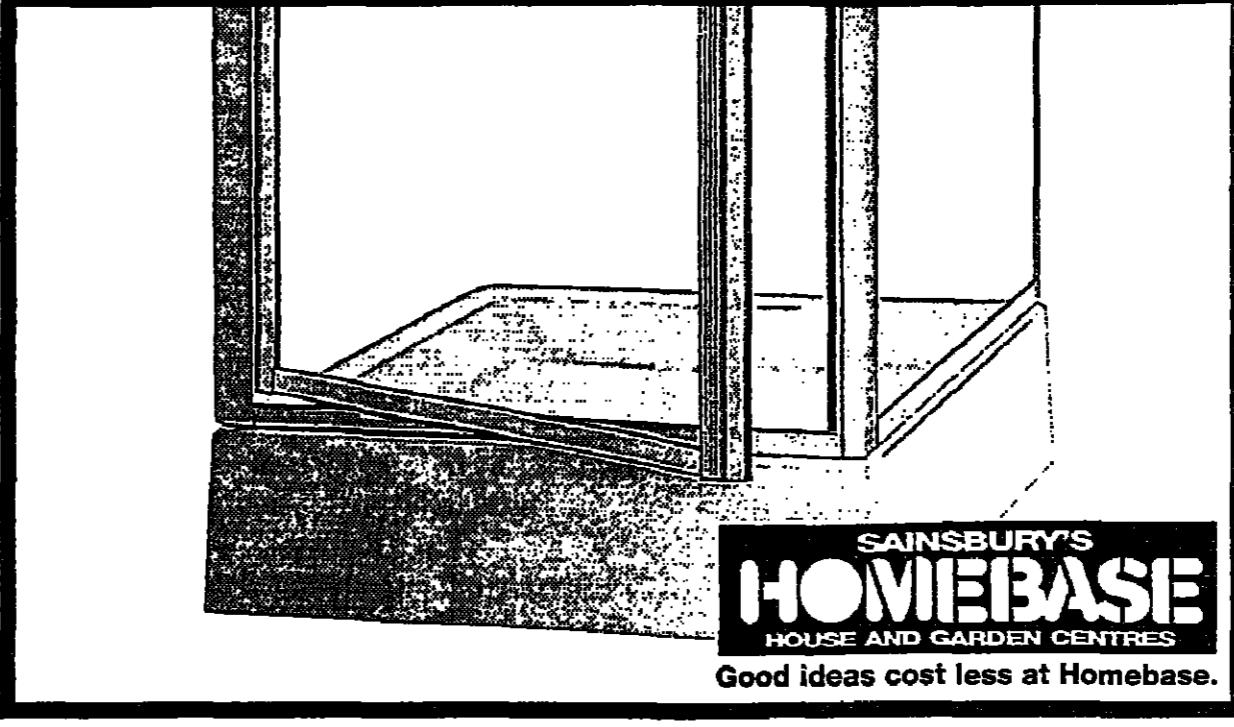
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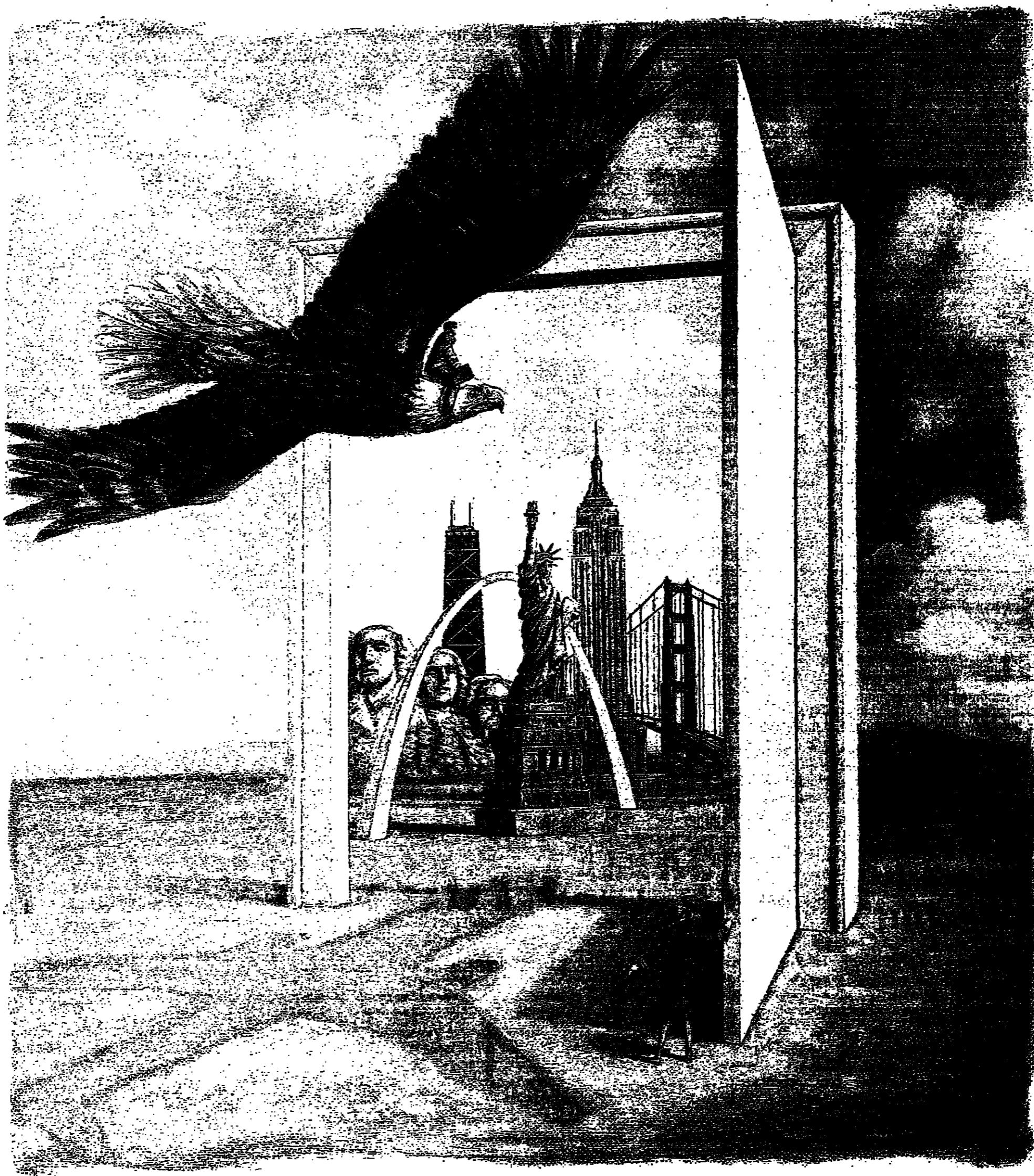
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Girl who tried to stop fight was killed by one kick

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A SINGLE kick to the head by a 12-year-old girl was enough to kill Louise Allen, who was set upon as she tried to stop a fight on her way home from a funfair, a court was told yesterday.

The 12-year-old and her friend, 13, stood beside their solicitors in the dock at Nottingham Crown Court and admitted manslaughter after the Crown dropped charges of murder. Richard Nathan, for the prosecution, told Mr Justice Hidden, that the more serious charge was being dropped in the light of the post-mortem examination results.

They showed that Louise, 13, from Corby, Northamptonshire, died from the kind of internal bleeding in the head often caused by a blow or a punch. It did not have to be a severe blow, the court was told. Mr Nathan also said that the Crown believed it would be difficult to prove that there was specific intent to kill or cause serious injury when the youngster aimed the kick.

Mr Nathan told the court that the fight began shortly before 8pm on Monday, April 27, as a group of girls were returning home to a council estate from a funfair. There was an incident in which

a schoolgirl was recovering in hospital yesterday after being abducted and beaten by a gang of teenage girls over six hours. The girl, 13, suffered a broken wrist, bite marks, severe bruising and injury to her ear during the attack in Gorton, Greater Manchester, on Wednesday. One of the gang rang her parents to say: "We've beaten up your daughter and dumped her in the road."

Louise's friend was challenged to a fight by the younger of the accused. Shortly afterwards, she was sitting astride the friend and striking her.

Louise tried to pull the girl off, the court was told. This was seen by a large number of girls all roughly the same age.

At this point the accused's friend also intervened and, in the next few minutes, Louise received the blow that put her on a life-support machine in Kettering General Hospital. The equipment was switched off the next day.

Mr Nathan said that witness statements suggested that first one girl and then the other kicked Louise in the head. But he said that to establish a charge of murder the Crown would need to

provide specific intent either to kill the victim or to inflict some serious injury. "We are dealing here with a 12-year-old and a 13-year-old and the Crown has been given material that indicates the 13-year-old has the intelligence quotient that puts her in the bottom 12 per cent of the population."

The post-mortem examination report showed only three obvious injuries to Louise, all bruises to the head. The largest of them was seven centimetres by three centimetres. This may have been the cause of her death, said Mr Nathan. The report showed she died of internal bleeding. "The blow need not be severe and it is widely accepted that such an injury often follows moderate force."

Howard Morrison, defending the younger child, said his client accepted that she aimed a kick at Louise as she lay on the ground. She did not think any kick had landed, but accepted that evidence suggested it must have done.

Sally Bennett-Jenkins, defending the older child, said her client was willing to accept that she pulled Louise away from the fight by her hair and that there was a tussle. The judge called for probation reports to be drawn up on both girls and adjourned the hearing until later this month.



Louise Allen died after she was attacked by two girls on her way home from a funfair. Her parents gave permission for her life support machine to be switched off

US-style clerks to help judges clear backlog

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

JUDGES are to take on young lawyers as American-style clerks to do their routine work in an attempt to clear the backlog of appeals. The idea has come from Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, who yesterday described the lack of administrative support for judges as absurd.

The Court of Appeal is faced with a rising backlog of unheeded appeals. Last year the figure rose from 1,600 in 1994 to 1,800. There was also a backlog for leave to appeal.

The time taken to hear cases is growing. Last year the Court of Appeal said it could hear only 70 per cent of cases within 18 months of the date they were set down for trial. For some kinds of cases, the wait was more than two years.

The scheme, reported in this week's *Law Society Gazette*, will be modelled on programmes in the United States and New Zealand. A dozen young lawyers will be chosen as judicial assistants to work closely with judges. They will be drawn from trainee or recently qualified solicitors and barristers in the last stage of pupillage.

A Court of Appeal judge, Lord Justice Orton, has been appointed to oversee the project, which is expected to be run in the new year. Both the Law Society and Bar will put forward 12 candidates each for

a shortlist. Judges will whittle down the list and conduct interviews.

Yesterday Lord Woolf said that for too long the civil justice system had been the poor relation of criminal and family law and had not had its fair share of resources. At a conference in London organised by the Legal Action Group to discuss his civil justice reforms, Lord Woolf said there were "obvious economies" that could be made in the civil courts. One was to give judges proper administrative support. The traditional High Court judge's clerk had been devised as part of the system long ago, he said.

"That person on the whole is the sole resource that a judge has - and it is an unskilled resource. That is absurd."

Under his proposals, judges would take on a more active role as trial managers. With that new role, they would need clerks with skills "much closer to the old solicitors' clerks or legal executives".

Recently the poor facilities for judges trying civil disputes were criticised by judges at the Bar conference. Judge Weeks, QC, said that judges had no "clerical or other assistance and if they want to type a judgment or write a letter they have to do it themselves".

Law, page 40



Professor Muller-Dethlefs and his puzzling subject

It's a black and white case, but not to scientists

By PAUL WILKINSON

SCIENTISTS from across the world have gathered in earnest to consider a conundrum that has baffled the world for decades: why do bubbles in Guinness go down in the glass when every other drink sends its fizz shooting to the surface?

The symposium at York University examined the Great Guinness Conjecture expounded by Klaus Muller-Dethlefs, Professor of Chemistry at York and a keen Guinness-drinker. He was first drawn to the problem in a bar in New Hampshire after attending a conference on techniques for studying nucleuses using high-tech lasers.

He and his American colleague, Professor Phil Johnson, mused on why the bubbles behaved the way they did. Professor Muller-Dethlefs, who recently moved from the Munich Technical Institute, said: "We realised it was similar to some of the other problems we're trying to solve."

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Hotline for sinners to hear the call

By ANDREW MAGEE

A BREAKAWAY Irish bishop began a premium telephone line yesterday to hear confessions.

The Tridentine Bishop Michael Cox, St. Malachy's, wants to raise funds to restore a church in Birr, Co. Offaly, and said that he had a "divine revelation" to set up the 15-minute line. Callers hear a recorded message offering an interview with the bishop, a healing line, mass dedications, absolution, and a confessional which plays a prayer then tells them to confess after the tone. They are told not to give names.

Bishop Cox, St. Malachy's, said to all the recorded confessions: "I give absolution to all those who phone. I will offer mass for them. God



Bishop Cox: confessions

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Children's chance of surviving accidents is better than ever

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

SERIOUSLY injured children admitted to hospital after accidents have a dramatically increased chance of surviving because of better trauma care, researchers have found.

A study of 3,200 children and young people treated in 122 hospitals in Britain over the past seven years shows that the chances of surviving a serious accident have improved by 65 per cent. The improvement has been greatest in children under five, whose risk of dying in hospital fell by 21 per cent between 1989 and 1995. Among children aged 5-14, the death rate fell 13 per cent a year and among 15 to 24 year olds by 17 per cent.

More than two thirds of the victims were involved in a road accident and three quarters suffered a head injury. On admission to hospital, all the victims had suffered major trauma as measured on an injury severity scale.

Ian Roberts, director of the

child health monitoring unit at the Institute of Child Health, London, who conducted the study, said: "My hunch is that it is less to do with high-tech medical innovations and more likely because patients are getting better basic trauma management."

Dr Roberts said that the findings, published in the *British Medical Journal*, cast doubt on government claims that child accident rates were improving. A reduction in accident deaths of 33 per cent for under 15s and 25 per cent for 15 to 24 year olds by 2005 has been set as a target under the Health of the Nation strategy and on present trends these could be exceeded.

such as checking that the patient's airway was clear, that they were breathing properly and not losing blood.

"Accident victims being taken into hospital now are more likely to be seen by a senior doctor than they were. More are getting brain scans and doctors are less likely to miss abdominal injuries, maybe because they are more aware of their importance. There has been a recognition that this is an important problem and patients needed a better standard of initial trauma management."

Dr Roberts said that the findings, published in the *British Medical Journal*, cast doubt on government claims that child accident rates were improving. A reduction in accident deaths of 33 per cent for under 15s and 25 per cent for 15 to 24 year olds by 2005 has been set as a target under the Health of the Nation strategy and on present trends these could be exceeded.



The stone being carried from Westminster Abbey yesterday at the start of its return to Scotland

Stone of Destiny goes home in a Land Rover

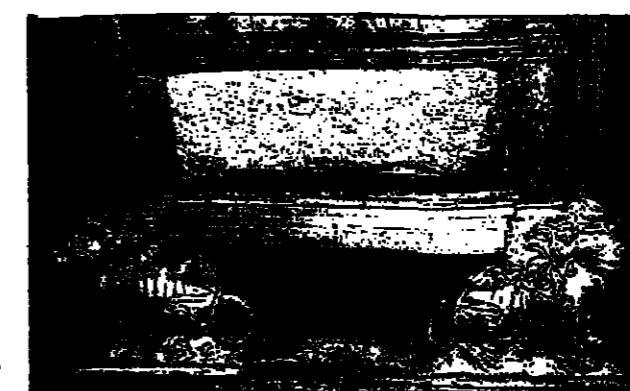
BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

THE Stone of Destiny, historic symbol of Scottish nationhood, will make its glorious return home today in the back of an Army Land Rover, 700 years after it was seized by Edward I.

The sandstone slab, known as the Stone of Scone, will cross the border at the town of Coldingham at 10am.

Security will be tight as the relic, Coronation stone of British monarchs for centuries, is escorted by the Coldstream Guards on to Coldingham Bridge. It will be handed over to the 1st Battalion The Royal Scots and the 1st Battalion The King's Own Scottish Borderers, before being piped over the Tweed and led in procession through the town to a reception where Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, will welcome the stone home. It will then be escorted on to Edinburgh. Yesterday the stone began its journey north after leaving Westminster Abbey at 7am in a blue wooden box with a wax seal.

The last time the stone left London, it lay in two in the boot of a Ford Anglia driven by a Scottish nationalist student.



The stone was in Westminster Abbey for 700 years

Edinburgh. At the laboratory of Historic Scotland, the heritage agency, experts will decide if restoration is needed.

This time the mode of transport was slightly more dignified. Lothian and Borders Police refused to disclose any information about the route for security reasons. The stone was guarded by three police outriders, a white van and two Range Rovers. Last night it was under army guard at Ouston camp, west of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Private Davie McCullouch, 24, from Stranraer, will chaperone the stone to a service at St Giles Cathedral and a ceremony at the castle to be attended by the Duke of York on behalf of the Queen.

Letters, page 21

Blood clot killed student in her sleep

By A STAFF REPORTER

A STUDENT who died in her sleep in her first week at Oxford University suffered a rare lung condition, an inquest was told yesterday.

Rachel Steer, 18, died from a heart attack caused by a blood clot in her lungs. Sanjiv Manek, the pathologist, said: "Usually there are reasons for this condition but there are cases where you cannot find any cause. It is a natural phenomenon."

"Usually it does occur in young females but it is an extremely rare condition. I think she died within two or three hours of going to bed."

Miss Steer, from Surbiton, Surrey, was a Classics student at St Hilda's. She was found on October 21, two days after her death, after she failed to attend a lecture and the alarm was raised by a friend.

Recording a verdict of death by natural causes, Nicholas Gardiner, the Oxfordshire Coroner, said: "This is a very rare condition, one you can't do anything in particular to prevent, except that a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise would help."

Miss Steer's parents, Clifford and Christine, did not attend the inquest.

Stable girl provoked me, accused tells court

By JOANNA BALE

A FARMWORKER claimed yesterday that a stable girl hit him with an iron bar before he killed her with it in a hail of blows. Stephen Webber told a jury that he had loved Jessie Hurlstone, 27, but killed her after she "cut him dead" when she was with her friends and appeared ungrateful for presents he had bought.

Mr Webber, 39, pleaded not guilty at Exeter Crown Court to murdering Miss Hurlstone in October last year at Hawson Stables near Buckfastleigh, Devon, owned by the National Hunt trainer Richard Frost.

Mr Webber said that he had known Miss Hurlstone for about three years and had left his bungalow near Buckfastleigh to her in his will. He had been happy for it to be a platonic relationship, although he admitted feeling jealous when he saw her kissing a boyfriend.

Mr Webber said that he visited Miss Hurlstone at her caravan to discuss claims that he had wanted to get her into trouble over housing benefit. "The bar was just to frighten the girl. I do not know what made me do what I did," he told police. The trial continues.

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Wealth gap closes as poorest escape from dire poverty

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE growth in inequality that accelerated during the 1980s has been reversed, with many of Britain's poorest people escaping from dire poverty, according to official statistics.

The main cause for the narrowing gap is that top salaries, in spite of the occasional "fat cat" scandal, are increasing no faster than lower wages. Higher taxes and more generous welfare benefits for people in work have helped to reduce inequality.

The debate about the poor getting poorer will be strongly affected by the first official analysis of what Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, likes to call "income mobility". Ministers have been embarrassed by surveys that have repeatedly shown that the gap between the poorest and richest grew rapidly during the 1980s.

Mr Lilley has been keen to find evidence that the poor are not a permanent mass of hopeless cases doomed to remain destitute. He believes the poorest are a constantly changing group of individuals who have fallen on hard times but will soon be able to pull themselves back up.

Yesterday's figures, from the Government Statistical

Service, looked at the poorest 10 per cent in 1991; those living on less than £119 a week. They show that 60 per cent rose above the bottom tenth by 1994 but not far: most were still in the lowest third.

Although there was evidence of people rising from extreme poverty and then falling back, 60 per cent managed to stay up. During those three years the average weekly income of the poorest tenth rose from £101 to £150.

People who have been poor for a long time have less hope of escaping poverty. Those newly fallen into the bottom income level tended to have been just above it, rather than plummeting spectacularly from the richer groups.

The increase of lone parents means the proportion of children living in a home where no one earns anything has risen from 18 per cent in 1970 to 31 per cent in 1993-94. The rise in all households where no adult of working age receives a wage rose from 8 to 17 per cent. The combined effect of the recession and owning property has doubled the number of mortgage payers in the bottom tenth from 5 to 10 per cent.

In the past year there have been modest increases in in-

come across the board, but the poorest have fared better than the richest. Causes include a fall in unemployment by 950,000 since the peak in December 1992, lower mortgage rates and an increase in income for pensioners.

The lives of the poor have improved since 1979 through mass ownership of consumer goods. Among the bottom fifth of the population, 90 per cent have a washing machine, 85 per cent a freezer and 75 per cent central heating.

The biggest winners since the Conservatives came to power have been pensioners and working people, whose incomes have increased by more than the average 37 per cent in real terms, while the income of the unemployed lagged. The increase in private pensions explains a significant fall in the proportion of elderly people in poverty.

Andrew Mitchell, a Social Security Minister, said: "The trend of increasing inequality in the 1980s has not continued. I am pleased to see signs that even the least well off are continuing to improve their living standards."

□ **Households Below Average Income** (Stationery Office: £30)

Sir John Soane's museum will use £738,000 for expansion



Soane: he died in 1837



Lottery grant for hidden treasure

By MARCUS BINNEY

A MUSEUM that has 9,000 Robert Adam drawings sitting in a cupboard has been given a £738,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant to expand its premises.

Sir John Soane's museum at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, Holborn, London, is full of more surprises than any other building in London, with trick mirrors, hanging domes and numerous tiny vestibules filled with antiquities, busts, paintings and

models. Little known a decade ago, it is now on the must-see list for many tourists, attracting 76,000 visitors last year.

Soane bequeathed his house and collection to the nation by an Act of Parliament in 1833 which specified that everything should remain as it was on the day he died. "All the pictures are hanging on the same nails. What had been a museum in Soane's lifetime retains the atmosphere of a private house today," said Christopher Woodward, the assistant curator.

Soane had lived with his family in a house at number 12, which he built in 1792, adding on his museum at number 13 in 1812. Then in 1823 he added the third house at number 14 to make a matching composition. Soon afterwards he sold number 14, which is now like its neighbours, a Grade I listed building, to a solicitor who had promised to keep it as a family home but promptly turned it into an office. Mr Woodward said:

"The house was perfect in every detail when he sold it. It still has all the quirky details like starfish ceilings." The Soane museum tried to acquire number 14 in the 1960s, but was refused a grant by the Treasury. However, the Heritage Lottery Fund has given the application fast-track treatment, enabling the museum to meet a four-month deadline set by the current owner, an insurance company, to buy the property. Margaret Rich-

ardson, the curator, said: "We will create a Robert Adam study centre and facilities for children to study architecture."

"Soane was the first and greatest professor of architecture in England. The models, drawings and diagrams he made for Royal Academy students are so clear and simple that they can be used today. Number 14 will enable us to reopen the upper floors of the museum, which have been used as offices."

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THERE'S A GREAT DEAL GOING ON THIS CHRISTMAS

Britons win EU backing in French ski battle

By OLIVER AUGUST

A theory that jumping up and down strengthens bones was supported by research in Finland reported in *The Lancet*. The bone mass density of women aged 35 to 45 who did special training rose by between 1.4 and 3.7 per cent.

Raid on gypsies

A loaded pistol, four shotguns and drugs were seized by armed police during a raid on a gypsy camp in Streatham, south London. Nine men and two women were being questioned yesterday.

Payout to MP

Anthony Steer, Tory MP for South Hams, accepted substantial undisclosed libel damages over an article in the *Sunday Express* which said he had behaved like a lager lout on a trip to Cyprus.

Flashgun rescue

James Graham, 56, from Calgary, Canada, was rescued from a hill on South Uist in the Western Isles after alerting rescuers with a flashgun. He had set off to take photographs and became bogged down.

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Bristol City Council is seeking 250 volunteers next month to test a £1 million road-toll project funded by the European Commission. A card on their windscreens will register on scanners when they use the A44.

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Zaire tragedy: can the world save a million



Confused refugees mass on the shore of Lake Kivu in Zaire, condemned to endure yet another eruption of hatred. Once again the dark heart of the continent is at the centre of the world stage. Once again Central Africa is a byword for famine, suffering, cruelty and indescribable horror.

Sam Kiley, our Africa correspondent, has been reporting from the front line of the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic conflict for the past three years. He has witnessed terrible events and reported on the complete collapse of civil society. His vivid accounts of war, famine and brutality have put *The Times* at the forefront of international coverage of the conflict.

Continent plunges into new horror

As hundreds of thousands of refugees — the innocent and the guilty — flee the horrors of war and starvation, sucking in the international community, *The Times* offers unsurpassed coverage from the front line and our bureaux worldwide. And, for a wider perspective, Michael Binyon, Our Diplomatic Editor, explains the historical background to the latest crisis.

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Bloodshed, greed and intrigue fashioned former Belgian Congo out of jungle straddling the Equator

West remains wary of going back into sinister quagmire

IN WESTERN minds Zaire is for ever fixed as the heart of darkness. Since Stanley explored the vast jungle straddling the Equator, the former Belgian Congo has acquired a sinister reputation, further blackened by Conrad's searing exposé of greed, exploitation and sheer evil.

Belgium's record was abysmal in the Congo, the size of Western Europe and the richest and worst administered colony in Africa. It was once the personal fiefdom of the rapacious King Léopold II. The plunder of its riches, the failure to train Congolese senior civil servants and the precipitous departure in 1960 plunged the country into immediate civil war. Zaire was born amid bloodshed and confusion.

The chaos at independence presented the United Nations with its greatest military and political challenge since the Korean War. It barely survived, paralysed by the resulting bitter East-West rift. UN intervention cost millions of pounds, hundreds of casualties and took the life, in a plane crash, of Dag Hammarskjöld, the Secretary-General.

The slaughter of civilians,

**MICHAEL BINION,
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR ON
THE ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT IN
CENTRAL AFRICA**

Union, the CIA and Western mining interests left an indelible impression of bloodshed and bungling that has haunted the West and the UN.

As the fighting dragged on, weariness overtook the early optimistic efforts to separate warring tribes: the famed remark by a BBC reporter running up to the forties carrying nuns rescued from the jungle summed up the horror and the cynicism: "Is there anyone here who's been raped and speaks English?"

Small wonder, therefore,

that the world is so wary of returning.

The crisis began within days of Belgium granting independence on June 30, 1960. African troops mutinied against their Belgian officers and went on the rampage in the capital, Léopoldville, now Kinshasa. The new Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, dismissed the Belgian officers and appointed a former journalist, Joseph Mobutu, as Army Chief of Staff. Belgium rushed in 10,000 paratroopers. They restored order, but so intense was the hatred of

their presence that the UN agreed to intervene.

Hammarskjöld prepared a "stop-gap" plan to send forces drawn initially from Africa. Commanded by General Carl van Horn, they arrived in mid-July, but were immediately opposed by Lumumba. Days before their arrival, the southern mineral-rich province of Katanga, now Shaba, declared independence. Backed by the huge mining interests of the Belgian-owned firm Union Minière and 20,000 Europeans living there, Moise Tshombe, the premier, refused permission for UN forces to land.

Lumumba, a leftwing bitterly opposed to Belgium and the West, was unable to control the country or regain control of Elisabethville, the Katangan capital. Rioting and looting spread. The UN forces were increased to 5,000 men, as Ethiopians, Swedes, Moroccans and Irish forces, seeing action for the first time, were flown in. The Americans provided transport.

Food in the capital was short as communications were paralysed. Faced by the refusal of Belgium to withdraw troops as long as its citizens were held hostage and in danger, Lumumba threatened to call for Soviet help.



A distraught man emerges from his car to plead with Indian troops advancing on Jadiotville, in the former Belgian Congo, in 1963. His wife and a friend inside the car had just been killed when the soldiers attacked the vehicle.

More troops arrived from Canada, Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan and Malaya. At their height the UN forces numbered 19,800 from 30 countries. They were largely ineffective, however, lacking equipment, weapons, ammunition or a clear mandate. They could not reach the interior or prevent atrocities. One group of 13 Italian airmen was slaughtered and, amid widespread horror, some troops were reportedly eaten by cannibals. Hammarskjöld and Ralph Bunche, the UN Assistant Secretary-General,

shuttled between Léopoldville and Elisabethville, but could not end the rebellion or rifts in the Congolese Government. Amid the confusion, General Mobutu staged a coup against Lumumba, and the President, Joseph Kasavubu, installed a military junta. Lumumba was held under house arrest. The Russians denounced the entire UN operation and demanded that Hammarskjöld resign. Lumumba slipped away from his UN guard, trying to reach his base in a provincial town: he was captured by General Mobutu's forces, and executed a few months later. The West, and the CIA in particular, were blamed. Six left-wing countries withdrew their forces in protest.

The UN forces at first had no mandate to intervene in the growing civil war, but in 1961 the Security Council authorised it to use force. Gradually the country was pacified, although not Katanga. White mercenaries, employed by Tshombe, terrorised the rest of the country as they fought for Katangan independence and prevented the arrival of UN

forces. Among the most notorious was "Mad" Mike Hoare. In September 1961, Hammarskjöld was urged to negotiate with the Katangans, but on his way to meet Tshombe in Northern Rhodesia, his plane crashed. The war dragged on, but in January 1963 Tshombe surrendered. UN forces left in June 1964; the operation had cost about \$10 million a month — a huge sum in 1960. Tshombe became Prime Minister of a united country, only to lose power to General Mobutu in a 1965 coup. Katangan rebels with

drew to Angola, harrying the Congo for years.

General Mobutu changed the country's name to Zaire in 1971. Consolidating his grip through manipulation of tribal loyalties, he bought off opposition using the huge personal funds he has accumulated, largely from the nationalised mines.

Growing corruption, mismanagement and the neglect of infrastructure led to periodic rebellion. Four years ago there was a virtual coup by the Government, which refused to recognise his authority. However, he changed the currency, effectively bankrupting his enemies. His brutal use of troops sent to smash shops and harass civilians, shook the opposition: the "dual government" was ended with the appointment of a compromise Prime Minister, Leon Kengo wa Dondo, still in power.

The Congo saw the epitome of Fleet Street buccaneering. Journalists were often in great danger, accused of being spies, and their reports could be crucial to the political outcome. Despite a barely functioning telegraph network, no expense was spared. In one typical exchange, the *Daily Express* cabled George Gale, its correspondent:

"MAIL'S YOUNGHSUAND UPSHOT REBELS REDWISE STOP WHY YOU UNSHOT QUERY."

He explained by Telex that Youngusband had a monopoly on the only light aircraft available. The *Express* snapped back:

"WHY YOU UNBUY PLANE QUARY EDITOR DEMANDS EXPLANATION STOP."

Gale chartered a plane, and the race for scoop was on.

US intervention risks Clinton's policy agenda

AS THE American 508th Airborne Infantry Regiment prepares to fly out to Zaire, Javier Solana, the Nato Secretary-General, confirmed yesterday that American troops would stay in Bosnia-Herzegovina next year.

The decision, flagged for months by the Clinton Administration, is controversial; the memory of the bodies of American servicemen being dragged through the streets of Somalia in the first months of Mr Clinton's presidency has not faded.

Mr Clinton, who has been struggling to make the decisions before leaving today for holiday and a tour of East Asia, is also searching urgently for a Secretary of State to replace Warren Christopher. In Zaire and Bosnia, he risks repeating some of the worst mistakes of his first term. The greater danger is that he may let trouble spots such as Zaire and Bosnia distract him from more politically awkward

other foreign-policy objectives which must go through Congress, such as a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty for nuclear weapons, a chemical weapons treaty and an expansion of Nato. In trade policy, he also wants to extend the North American Free Trade Agreement to Chile and to smooth China's path into the World Trade Organisation.

It is clear Congress will give him as a rough ride in his second term as in his first. Jesse Helms, the arch-conservative, remains chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Benjamin Gilman, defender of human rights in China, will continue to head the House International Relations Committee.

Despite the political difficulty of the battles Mr Clinton will face, it would be damaging to America and its military allies and trading partners if he used the flashpoints of Zaire and Bosnia to duck more far-reaching problems.

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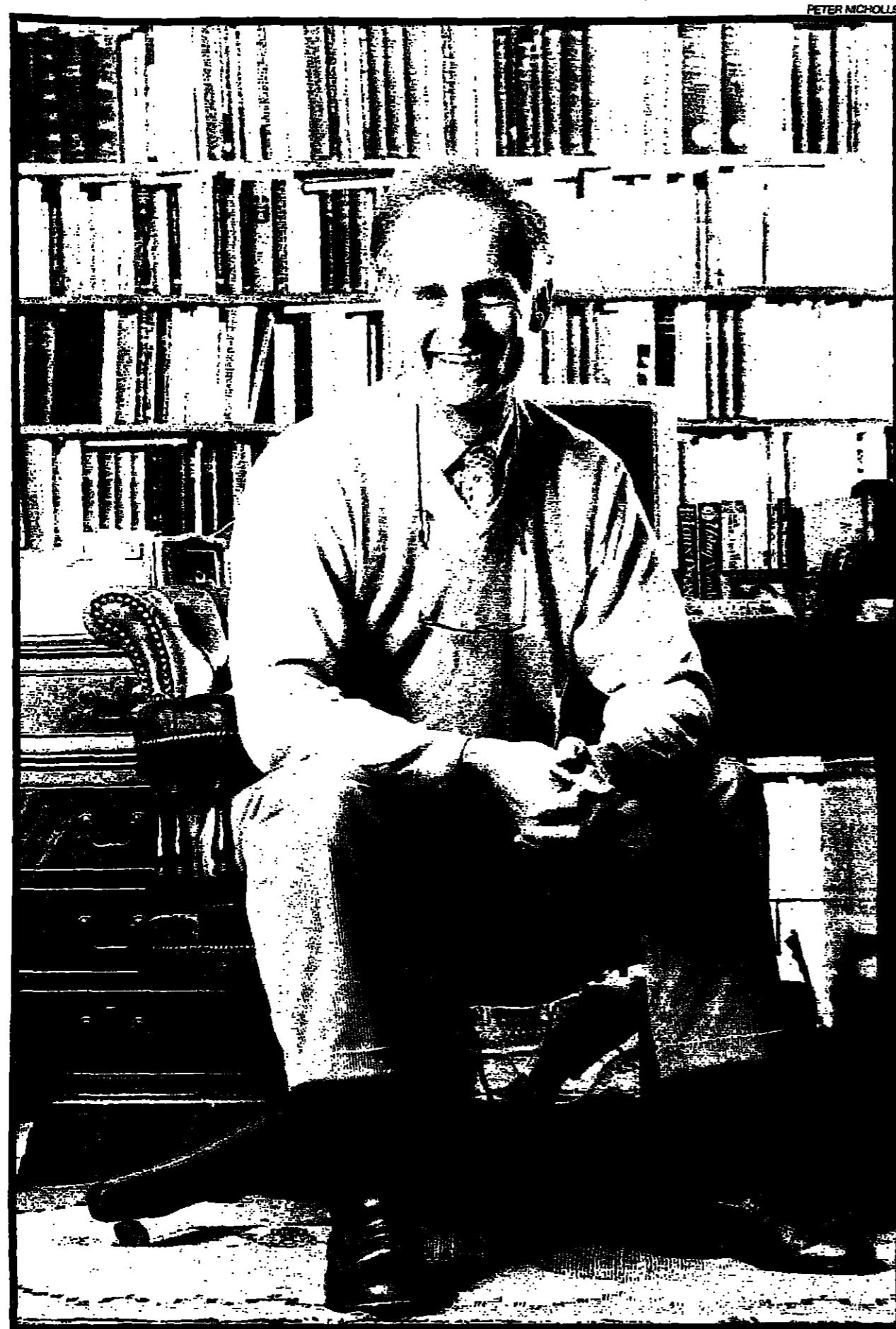
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The eccentric Count Nikolai Tolstoy is looking forward to a new challenge - MP for the UK Independence Party



"I have good reason to know that Britain is not perfect — but I believe that we have to put our own house right"

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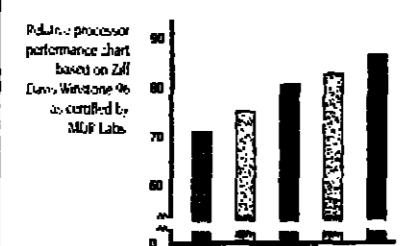
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Wielding a sabre for the freedom of England

Count Nikolai Tolstoy seemed vague about the seat he is contesting on December 12 on behalf of the UK Independence Party. I said I thought it was Barnsley East, the by-election caused by the death of Labour MP Terry Patchett. His wife insisted that it could not possibly be in the north — "Isn't there a Barnsley quite near London — almost on the Tube?" she said, because he cannot drive.

Her husband, too, was unclear yesterday about where in the country he was to stand. The Eurosceptic Party founded by Dr Alan Sked, the LSE historian, had only asked him that morning, and he is so busy.

What keeps Tolstoy busy is the continuing saga of his battle to prove the guilt of those who, in 1945, dispatched 70,000 Cossacks and Yugoslavs to their deaths at the hands of the Russians. In 1989 Tolstoy was found guilty of libelling Lord Aldington, who was awarded record damages of £1.5 million. Tolstoy should have been ruined — but the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg last year ruled the damages to be "excessive".

Britain has largely ignored the Strasbourg ruling; so his debt stands. Yet Tolstoy still lives in the Oxfordshire house that remains his only asset.

The tennis court has a hole in it; the house has that cosy shabbiness that so suits the English country house. The four children's school fees have been paid by an unnamed benefactor. And the case still engulfs this mildly eccentric writer who was living quietly, making a respectable income, writing about whatever seized his interest (Merlin, the Tolstoy family, a life of Lord Carmarthen, the Regency peer who tried to murder Napoleon) until he became possessed by the vic-

tims of Yalta. Tolstoy lit a log fire. He sees himself as a laughing cavalier, tall and craggly handsome, with that self-deprecating candour which can spill over into naivete. Some say he is "obsessive, and possibly slightly mad".

His father Dmitri, born in Moscow, escaped to England from the Bolsheviks in 1920. When they divorced, his father married a Russian; his English mother married the writer

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



Patrick O'Brian, whose historical naval stories enjoy a cult following.

He lists one of his hobbies as "broadsword-and-buckler play" although his litigation is now a more consuming hobby. After Wellington College he read history at Trinity College Dublin. As a prep-school master he would take children on camping trips with suitcases of fireworks, and stage mock battles. He met his pretty wife Georgina at a Civil War gathering; they plighted their troth at the siege of Warwick Castle. They have just celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. Georgina, sizzling sausages on the Aga, is entirely on her husband's side in all his travails.

Tolstoy undoubtedly changed public opinion by revealing the appalling and brutal plight of the victims of Yalta. When a memorial was erected in London, Margaret Thatcher sent a contribution. And there it might have ended, had he not become involved with one Nigel Wates in writing a pamphlet naming the distinguished Lord Aldington, Chief of Staff in 1945 and Warden of Winchester.

"Sometimes people say, why did you do it? and the truth is I barely thought about it. I take care to write what I think is correct, but I had said much the same in a myriad other broadcasts and speeches. And even when Lord Aldington sued me I didn't take it too seriously, because I believed I could easily prove what I'd said, and I didn't really know that much about the law."

"I thought it would be rationally aired. Having read Bleak House I ought to have known better. I had no idea how much it would absorb my time, let alone the risk, and the cost. That showed a very naive

streak. Once you get involved with lawyers the money just pours out like water."

He was astonished to find the High Court judges, who refused him leave to appeal, were so ignorant of history: "One of them thought it was all something to do with the Charge of the Light Brigade." After the trial, Tolstoy's legal costs were met by the nameless English benefactor. "He's just someone who hates the double standard, that if an English war crime is involved, nobody's responsible. And he was right, because the recent legislation to try alleged Nazi war criminals in Britain, specifically restricted the category of war criminals to people who served in the German forces — to stop that bloody Tolstoy."

Lord Aldington is now 81. Tolstoy at 61 may well outlive him. "One day I shall be free to publish anything. Not just about 1945, but about what goes on behind the scenes in the British courts and Government, so the man on the Clapham omnibus can read it for himself."

He claims that his last book, *The Minister and The Massacre*, implicating Macmillan, has been covertly banned. "Even libraries such as the Bodleian have removed their copies." He believes compromising documents were withdrawn from the Public Record Office. He knows far more than he knew at his trial: he has been to talk to the Yugoslavs, and the Russian Government has released the Smersh files relating to the agreement in Austria.

He goes regularly to Moscow and in June he was made an honorary Cossack. "They presented me with a magnificent sabre, a lovely weapon. I greatly pleased the Cossacks by saying I could take off the head of an English judge with one slash." (It hangs over the fireplace in his dining room.)

In April he was threatened with having his precious library confiscated by bankruptcy trustees. "But they know if they ever came I would have the TV cameras of the world on the lawn." As he sees it, nobody dares make a move against him because there would be worldwide wantage. "King Alfred was born there so it's a good place to raise the standard of English independence, which once signed away can never be recovered."

The nation state is a focus of independence, and it is manageable. The idea of huge superstates is sinister in the extreme. This transference of power just brings a distancing. And we know about the corruption within the EC and the billions that will never be recovered. I always bear in mind Edmund Burke's words: 'For the triumph of evil, all that is necessary is that good men should do nothing.'

Some say he is obsessive and possibly slightly mad.

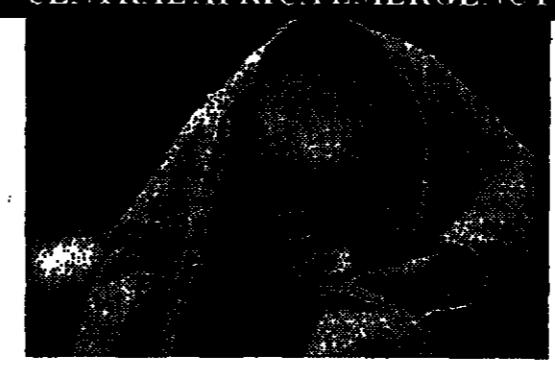
Hence the foray into politics, a new field. "My wife insists I did once vote Conservative, but I don't recall." He joined the UK Independence Party at the urging of his father-in-law: "Because I love history, I love the monarchy. I like gorgeous parades and bands and people in livery and heralds. But I hate injustice, and what Hamlet calls the insolence of office. I have good reason to know that Britain is not perfect — but I believe we have to put our own house right."

Sometimes Tolstoy sees himself, heart-sinkingly, as the Mr Casaubon figure from *Middlemarch*, embroiled in endless research. "The great consolation of my life has been Celtic mythology. My next book on the legend of the Holy Grail could fill five volumes." As a result of all the talking in the courts, his writing has atrophied. So yesterday a new computer arrived which allows him to dictate to the screen.

He does not expect to win Barnsley, wherever Barnsley may be. But he will fight the general election against the sitting Tory Robert Jackson at nearby Wantage. "King Alfred was born there so it's a good place to raise the standard of English independence, which once signed away can never be recovered."

The nation state is a focus of independence, and it is manageable. The idea of huge superstates is sinister in the extreme. This transference of power just brings a distancing. And we know about the corruption within the EC and the billions that will never be recovered. I always bear in mind Edmund Burke's words: 'For the triumph of evil, all that is necessary is that good men should do nothing.'

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The film that Mick Jagger banned

In 1968 the Rolling Stones' singer had a whim — a film shot in a circus, where he and friends would perform. But the Stones found themselves outshone and only now has the film been seen. Joseph Connolly reports

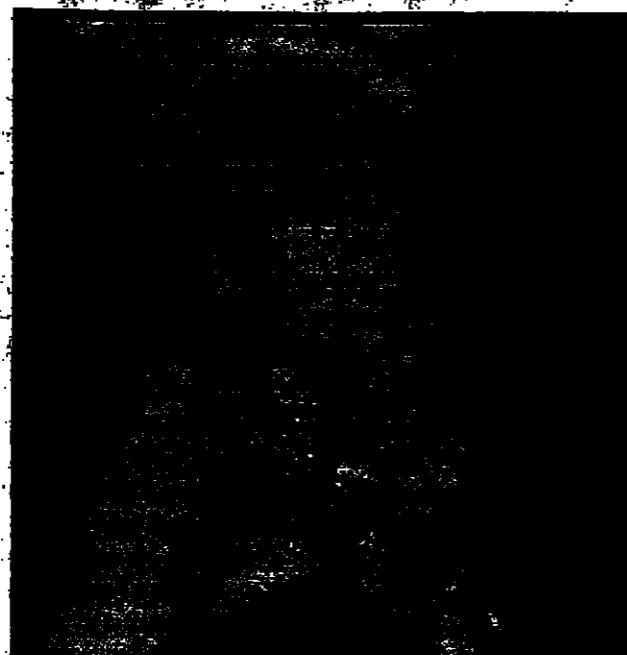
It was Mick Jagger who banned it," says Nick Haig, co-producer of the legendary 1968 Rolling Stones feature film, *Rock and Roll Circus*, selectively premiered last month at cinemas and this week available on video. This constitutes the first time that any version of the movie has ever been seen. In early 1969, between 30 and 40 hours of film were summarily abandoned — unedited and (certainly by Jagger) unloved.

"It was Brian Jones who was really screwing up the Stones by this stage," recalls Haig. "He was out of his tree. Mick decided that the group's performance simply hadn't been up to the mark, so he pulled the plug on the whole enterprise. I myself didn't even see the rushes."

A repudiated set from The Who (once rumoured to be Jagger's real reason for losing interest) was therefore lost to the world, as were contributions from Eric Clapton and John Lennon — no other Beatles alas, but Lennon of course insisted that Yoko Ono be a fellow artist. "It was the most extraordinary sight," says Haig. "John came on and played guitar, while Yoko appeared with a huge black sack. She climbed into it and someone zipped it up, whereupon she gyrated within the sack and groaned ... little known kept sticking out ... while Lennon twanged away."

As was the way at the end of the Sixties, the whole venture came about as a result of the whim of a megastar — in this case Jagger. The idea was that there should be a vast circus tent and in between the traditional acts, such as fire-eaters and knife-throwers, all the Rolling Stones' rock'n'roll mates could perform as they pleased. The Stones themselves were extraordinary and almost Sergeant Pepper costumed (even the "audience", recalls Haig — comprising VIPs of the day, friends of the moment and the usual thousands of hangers-on — were dressed in little ponchos of primary colours) and so all you needed — apart from love — were huge and ferocious animals.

At this point the insurers had a collective seizure. "Mick insisted upon a 'hot,'" says Haig. "But what are they going to do with it?" the insurers asked. Well, you never knew what rock stars were



Marianne Faithfull was one of the many guest artists



Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey, of The Who, left; and the original Rolling Stones line-up, with Brian Jones, in Sergeant Pepper-style clothes play to the cameras and an audience equally flamboyantly dressed



MICHAEL POWELL



Nick Haig was co-producer of Rock and Roll Circus

going to do, so I didn't even try to answer. They said that beyond a stipulated distance, every foot that Jagger came closer to the tent, the premium would rise by £50. Someone went into the cage at some point. I assume he came out."

Nick Haig came to Jagger's attention via his early directorial work on ITV's *Randy, Slappy, Go!* ("The person you remember only a passing crowd and a lighting gamut is that we were given no sets and a tiny studio"). Now 57, he was at the time the youngest director on the independent television network, and often worked with Michael Lindsay-Hogg, the eventual director of *Rock and Roll Circus* (and, later, of the Beatles' final performance on the rooftops of Apple in Savile Row). Lindsay-Hogg is the man responsible for the final edit of *Circus*. The video version is just over one hour long. This, according to Haig's recollection, is no more than a thirtieth of the stock available. "We filmed over two very long days," he says. "Eighty-nine or nine in the morning until three or four the next morning. It was all very amiable, no scenes. Many people were stoned or drunk, of course — but nicely so. Brian Jones was drinking lime juice cut with acetone. At one point he was playing the maracas, but Keith Richards had to stand behind him before the shoot and move his arms up and down, in an attempt to get the beat."

After the abandonment of

the project, Haig went on to produce and direct two Jimi Hendrix shows at the Albert Hall, as well as a 1969 programme called *Supershows*. "This we did in an old lime factory near Staines, which was converted into a studio. The programme contained the only existing Sixties footage of Led Zeppelin, and we also had

having it. We did, after a court case, eventually get the £10,000 but I'll never forget that meeting with Klein in his Dorchester suite. He was perfectly polite, wearing pyjamas I recall but the room was lined with all these grim mafia heavies: I truly thought I was going to be blown away — I didn't think I'd ever walk out of that room." Haig was as intrigued as anyone else by the prospect of seeing even an hour of this ancient extravaganza, but he stands to make no money out of it. On the video release, however, he received no credit and is contemplating legal action. He says modestly: "I am just a hardworking, jobbing director-producer — I received a one-off flat fee." (That goes for his American television work as well — residuals were yet to be invented.)

Since those heady Sixties days, Haig has done every sort of production work, most recently taking the opportunity to direct a musical based on *Pride and Prejudice*. "It's a shame that *Circus* wasn't released at the time," he muses. "It just disappeared like it never happened. The lid closed, and it was no more. But that's how it sometimes was. Towards 1970, I nearly brought the Beatles back together to play in a Roman amphitheatre in Libya, but apparently Ringo didn't like the food so that was more or less that."

Eric Clapton and Stephen Stills."

Haig then went to America where he became a director on *Hawaii Five-O* and *Mission Impossible* (about a dozen episodes in all). On his return, he realised that Alan Klein (then the manager of both the Beatles and the Stones, and the man now behind *Circus*' imminent release) still owed Haig's company £10,000. "I said, pay us the money you owe, and I'll edit and finish the film for nothing, but he wasn't

The five-point guide to becoming a babe

YOU can hear them before you walk into the room. The place is crammed with tiny black dresses, razor-sharp bronzed cheekbones and swishing blonde tresses. The Cheekbone gang has come to sip champagne and celebrate the publication of *Back on Top, A Woman's Guide to Self-Esteem and Happiness*. Borrowing liberally from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, this spiritual route-finder promises to steer misguided modern females out of the City of Doom through the City of Happiness to the top of the Mountain of Clarity — each chapter representing an important stage on the voyage from fat, dowdy no-hoper to confident, ambitious sex kitten.

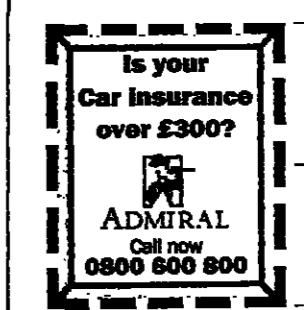
The philosophy of the book is surely lost on the Cheekbone gang — these babes have been sitting on the Mont Blanc of self-esteem ever since their first bra. One cannot imagine Vicky Barker, the book's author, ever getting lost in the Valley of Confusion ("The whole world has gone stark raving mad. Or is it just me?") let alone dallying in the City of Gloom (where "character assassins" such as Negative Self-Belief and the Inner Bitch wait to pounce). For even though Miss Barker claims to have hit a rough patch in 1992, she has emerged from what she describes as her "nose dive towards the gutter" and is now one of the gang. Tall, blonde and elegant, she circles the room exchanging animated air kisses with a line-up of guests boasting Joan Collins, Bob Geldof and Marie Helvin, as well as a smattering of Taras, Tamaras and Normandines.

Tired of being stuck fast in the throng of celebrity cleavages and keen to pick up a few tips, I home in on what seems to be the most famous pair of cheekbones in the room. They turn out to belong to Caprice Bourret, the gorgeous, pouting Californian fronting the Wonderbra campaign this winter. During a gap in the conversation, I seize my

chance: "I can't imagine you ever feeling depressed. Have you ever used a self-help book?" Caprice speaks!

"Until two months ago, I was severely depressed and really low. People were telling me to sign this contract and that contract, and people were harassing my folks back home. But now I'm enjoying life. And I think it's great that people can turn to books like these." The soft drawl exudes thoughtfulness and sincerity. From my vantage point on a level with her magnificent bosom, I feel rather comforted to have discovered that even goddesses can use a little self-help.

• *Back on Top, A Woman's Guide to Self-Esteem and Happiness* by Vicky Barker, Kogan Page, £7.99.



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Justice for Germany's former slaves

Michael Pinto-Duschinsky calls on Kohl to respect forgotten Nazi victims

Half a century on, the Nazi horrors refuse to recede into history. In Vienna, there is the sad spectacle of the sale of art treasures owned by Jewish victims. In Switzerland, there is the scandal over Nazi gold in its banks. In Britain, there is the attempt to bring alleged Nazi war criminals to justice. Yet one of the most revealing scandals from the Holocaust is only now starting to emerge. It is the refusal of Helmut Kohl's Government to acknowledge the claims of survivors of the slave labour factories attached to Auschwitz and other death camps.

While most of the Jews deported by the Nazis were shot or gassed, a minority were used as slave labour. They were mostly in their teens and twenties, and an estimated 40,000 are still alive. The brutal conditions in factories such as IG Farben's plant at Buna Auschwitz were in keeping with the policy of *Vernichtung durch Arbeit*. The victims were literally "to be destroyed through work", and this aim was usually achieved.

After the war, the leaders of the three major firms — Flick, Krupp and IG Farben — were imprisoned for war crimes after trials at Nuremberg. However, the Government of the newly created German Federal Republic deliberately excluded surviving slave workers

Germany is minimising the cruel Auschwitz regime

The legal arrangements were the work of Dr Hermann Abs, the wily head of the Deutsche Bank. Abs had only narrowly escaped prosecution by the Allies. He had been a member of IG Farben's supervisory board when it took the decision to build Buna Auschwitz, but denied all memory of the decision. Chancellor Adenauer entrusted him to lead the German team in negotiations with the Allies about Germany's outstanding debts. An obscure clause in the London Debt Settlement of 1953 — as interpreted by the German courts — meant that slave labourers were not entitled to compensation until there was a "final settlement" of the Second World War in a peace treaty. This clause meant an indefinite postponement, for there was no hope in 1953 of an end to the Cold War or of a peace treaty that included the Soviet Union. IG Farben (and its successor companies such as Bayer and BASF), Flick and Siemens could feel secure against Jewish demands.

When the Berlin Wall was breached in November 1989, the spectre of a formal peace treaty giving the former slave labourers a legal basis for claims clearly alarmed these corporations and the German Government. Therefore, the "2+4" reunification treaty of 1990 was intentionally drafted without the words "peace treaty". The Government even issued a formal statement in September 1996 that "there has never been a settlement [of the Second World War] by peace treaty".

Since 1990, the slave labourers have been blocked by this and by other arguments. Survivors were manhandled at IG Farben's recent annual meeting when they tried to speak. Personal appeals to the Flick family to set up a modest fund for former slave workers living in poverty in Hungary have remained unanswered. The German Government refuses to accept re-

sponsibility, arguing that Germany has already given enough compensation to Nazi victims — a total of 97,843 billion marks between 1953 and 1995.

The Ministry of Finance asserts that it is too late to consider claims of slave labourers dating back more than 50 years, even though it is the German courts that have postponed the claims pending a peace treaty. It hasn't been too late for Germany to demand the return from Russia and Poland of art treasures from Troy and elsewhere.

Still more appalling are the other legal arguments supported by the German authorities to resist the claims of 22 Auschwitz survivors in two continuing test cases. These arguments deny — or at least minimise — some central features of the Holocaust. Ignoring the cruel conditions in the concentration camps, the German Government maintains that the factories at Auschwitz did not violate international law and that the Slavery Agreement of 1926 included a "fundamental permission of forced labour for public purposes".

Two further legal technicalities are put forward to block the rights of these slave labourers. First, the Government's lawyers insist that since Auschwitz was not legally within German territory, but in Poland, claims must be made through the Polish rather than the German courts. At the same time, Germany insists that it has no further obligations to meet Polish claims. Second,

Germany's social security rules mean that slave labourers from Auschwitz or the Lodz ghetto who have survived are not entitled to German pensions. Since no insurance stamps were paid on their behalf. By contrast, wartime insurance payments were made on behalf of their German overseers who — like members of the SS — are therefore entitled to pensions.

It is not only the survivors who are outraged by these legal stratagems. An active minority of Germans, especially the young, are equally troubled. A recent meeting convened by the Catholic Diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart drew representatives from all the main German churches, from Jewish bodies, and from an impressive variety of German organisations devoted to Holocaust remembrance and education and to active measures to support the claims of the surviving slave labourers.

Both the Jewish and the German groups insist that the unresolved issue of compensation for Nazi slave labour is vital for several reasons. Some elderly survivors, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, are living in poverty. For others, mainly in Western Europe, Israel and the United States, the compensation is symbolic. It is intolerable for many survivors that their oppressors are receiving benefits which they are denied. Many Auschwitz and Belsen survivors also fear that if the companies which participated in the Holocaust are protected, today's war criminals and would-be perpetrators of genocide will believe they are immune.

The German Government must take decisive action to remove the legal blockages obstructing the cases of surviving slaves of the Nazi regime. Otherwise, Germany's claim to be a trustworthy member of the European family will have a hollow ring.

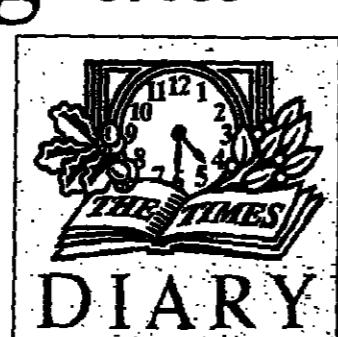
Still grata

THERE is an Inspector Dreyfus twitch about Neil Hamilton, MP. these days — not surprising after the mauling he has had in recent weeks. On Wednesday evening he was attending a dinner for Sloaney young Conservatives at the Cafe Royal, which attracted 20 or so other MPs and ministers.

Looking relaxed, aside from his new fit, he seemed excited about the Court of Appeal's decision to quash Michael Howard's refusal to grant British citizenship to Mohamed Al Fayed, Hamilton's Inspector Clouseau: "It's terrific news," he said, to fish-eyed gawps from his chinless audience. "Finally, the Home Office will have to come out and say exactly why his citizenship was denied. Then everything will be clear."

There was no hostility towards Hamilton from his fellow MPs. "I thought he was *persona non grata*," muttered a suit to one of the few younger MPs on parade. "My God no," replied the MP, his mouth creasing into a camp smile. "Excuse my Latin, but he is *persona non grata*."

• Celebrations of the narrow Tory victory in the Commons on BSE on Wednesday evening split into



Anabel's, the Berkeley Square nightclub. Well after midnight, a troupe of whips and junior Agriculture Ministers came snaking in past the surgically assisted blondes in the bar. Led by Sebastian Coe, junior whip and MP for Falmouth, they did not stay long but left grinning broadly.

Marjinal

THOUGH I am loath to return to the subject of the sprightly Editor of the *Daily Mirror*, Piers Morgan, his endeavours on behalf of the paper last week were so outstanding that they must be recorded.

When the *Mirror*'s agony aunt Marj Proops died, "Guten M-

Mastermind's last contestant...



Not so super stores

I should have more time for the big food chains if only they did not all sell the same tasteless pap

mighty statue) is going to vanish as well unless someone will fight for him.

Listen to Surendra Patel himself. He has been running his little shop for nearly 20 years (and there are many more Surendras, Petals), and it was he who said: "I am worried for my retailers. The big stores have saturated their market and now they are coming back for what is left of ours."

But that is not all; would that do so.

I begin with a plaint, attached to a dark headline. The headline read: "Is it closing time for the corner shop?" The next headline read: "Independents face massacre as giants open community stores on petrol station forecourts". And another said: "The relentless expansion of the grocery chains, backed by their vast resources, has eliminated many of the traditional high street shops". Put like all that, it sounds as if the corner shop is not only going down the plughole almost immediately this afternoon, but will never be seen again.

Let us see, however, what that indispensable lady Patience Wheatcroft can tell us about this gloomy story.

The big chains plan hundreds of small stores, opening all hours, plus the ultimate in convenience shopping — home delivery. Now small traders' representatives want government help in their battle against the megastores...

The oil companies are rushing to expand forecourt food retailing after seeing petrol pump profits decimated in the recent price war. Elf, Mobil and Shell have all recently announced plans to expand the scale of their stations, which date from the past ten years, about eight independent shop owners have given in the face to beat the supermarket giants and their huge out-of-town stores. Butchers, bakers and fishmongers have vanished from the high streets and the number of local grocers — corner shops — has halved.

And, of course, that great figure the Indian corner shopkeeper (to whom someone ought to erect a

nothing to do with you. What I am talking about can be seen replicated up and down the land. It is, of course, that all the shops I am talking about are stuffed in the stars with exactly the same things, and this dreary, awful realisation is finally dawning. Moreover, you will find exactly the same things in Paris and in New York, and — I have no doubt — also in Tokyo.

I tried it on clothes, but it goes much deeper. Take the latest compact disc and its latest number. And take food, where the pinch nips hardest — or should. How many food shops can we look into and see a great range of differences? And that brings us back to the supermarkets. Forget for the moment the small man who is being pushed out.

And now, of course, the fight is not to keep the small shop going or even to knock them out — it is a fight between the monster supermarkets: Safeway, Budgen, Sainsbury, Marks & Spencer, Waitrose, Tesco. (I shall come back to Tesco, but please be patient.)

It is, of course, a lost cause. Indeed, it is a doubly lost cause, because when the big boys start stamping on the little ones, the little ones do not put their backs to the wall and make ready for the fight — they ignore the little ones in their struggles against each other.

Very well: if that is what people want, who am I to say they mustn't have it? I have an answer to that, but before I give it, I want to show a parallel to these arguments.

Take Bond Street, and a great part of Oxford Street and a bit of Piccadilly. Stroll up and down, and look into the posh shops — DH Evans, Debenhams, Selfridges (Selfridges is going mad in its attempt to match the big boys), John Lewis, Next, Fenwicks and many others. Do not, please, turn the page if you live miles away from Oxford Street and think this is

unless he has already been pushed.

Once, some time ago, I was invited to watch, in a very large foodie,

the wrapping of the food. It was all

spotless, under bright light — but

not too bright — and I was almost

hypnotised. But not quite. Because,

when I came to my senses, I real-

ised I had seen several hundred

fresh, cleaned, edible slices of food

— every one of which was exactly

the same as all the others.

Bernard Levin

Now it is not for me to lay down rules of eating.

Indeed, it is not for me to

poke my nose in like this

at all. But yet the pity of it, Jag! Ol

lago, the pity of it, Jag! We could

have had a thousand thousand

tastes, all different, and another

thousand thousand, if we had

never seen or smelt those rows of

food which are perfectly clean, and

perfectly deboned, and perfectly

frozen, and perfectly tasteless.

Turn back to where I started.

What did those headlines say?

"Is it closing time for the corner

shop?" It seems that the answer is yes. But I would not be so sad for

every trolley!

Philip Howard



■ Zest! Howzat for zeal to zonk the zappy Zeitgeist?

According to the Prime Minister, the British *has* regained its zest for life. This comes as a surprise to those who never knew we had lost it, or never knew we had one to lose, or have trouble raising even a zephyr of zest after the first cup of tea. But the word is a piquant addition to our political lexicon, smelling of days when one was advised to add a pinch of zest while stirring up one's Christmas pudding.

And it bears the marks of John Major's own hand. The clever men at Saatchi's would have scripted a far more "relevant" phrase, such as their vacuous cliché of the "feel-good factor" or something with *buzz* in it, with its Venn diagram of meanings of telephone, buzz off, drugs, sex and buzzing around like a one-armed paperhanger. Or perhaps a recycling of *pizzazz*, coined by an American fashion editor. But zest comes from the same image-stable as those old maids forever bicycling to Communion down country lanes and the bastards who want to see their names carved in bronze with a dim echo of the poet Horace.

Apart from being useful for Scrabble, zest is a zany zebra of a word. It came from the French fashion of adding a thin scraping of the outer peel of orange or lemon to a drink to pep it up. As metaphor for something agreeable and then for hearty enjoyment of something agreeable, zest became a buzzword. The citations in the Dictionary are all drawn from masters of literature. Keats To Fancy: "That sweet minor zest / Of love, your kiss." Sarah Camp went to a laying-in or a laying-out with equal zest. Bertrand Russell defined the word well: "What hunger is in relation to food, zest is in relation to life."

But the origins of the French *zeste* are as zero as the *zebu*. Some say it is a synonym for the old French *zec*, but for whence that came they offer the etymologist's failed-again zero of "o.o.o." (of obscure origin). Others offer *baste* (Italian *basta*), "Enough". Some French dictionaries suggest the ethnic *zest* or "Nonsense", as in *en être entre le zist et le zeste* to be neither one thing nor the other. One otherwise sound encyclopaedia derives *zest* from *scistus*, under the misapprehension that this is the Latin from "having been cut". Twanging a zither at a venture, how about deriving it by a wordstide, from *gusto*, found in many European languages, and descended from the Latin *gustus*, taste?

Zest, as an electioneering buzzword, sounds quaint and grey to the trendies. I am sure the Saatchis and Mandelsons pucker their mouths at it, as though tasting a lemon. It is a funny old word. Sun politics is a funny old game. And for more than half the population, who need to have the clever advertisements explained to them, and even then don't quite understand them, there is something reassuring about funny old words from childhood. Mr Major's strength is his apparent ordinariness, in language as in appearance.

Grey is the subtlest of colours, and the most familiar to the British temperament. Van Dyke painted us in 30 different shades of grey. The most beautiful lines in English start: "Now came still evening on, and twilight grey / Had in her sober livings all things clad ..." Generations of schoolchildren had to translate them into Latin elegiacs, a testing exercise, for Latin has no generic words for either grey or brown. When Smart Alec mock Mr Major for being grey and fucking his shirt-tails into his underpants, they are recommending him to most of the population, who are rather like him. Politicians do better to write their own speeches and say what comes naturally, which is what the electors thought they were voting for. Neil Kinnock's finest hour came when he told a television interviewer: "I refuse to sit here and be kabbed by you." Not only did he slap down that the pushy interviewer on all our behalves, but he added a sharp new image to political discourse, which viewers immediately understood. Mr Major may not have the wandering way with but his grey zest adds a natural flavour to our political vocabulary.

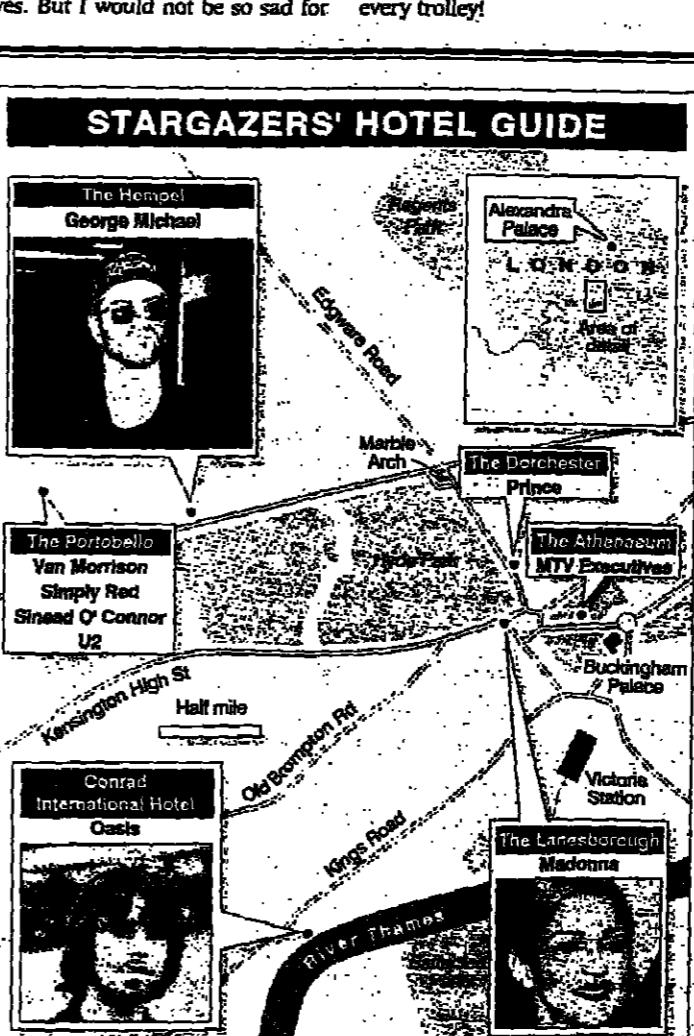
Hill. Possessed of a droll wit and snazzy French cuffs, Blankley is said to be considering career options from TV pundit to adoptive father. Gingrich is unsurprised. "At the convention in San Diego people would ask him for his autograph, and I knew from that point on he would fly on his own 747."

NOT since it hosted the rally for Michael Portillo's tenth anniversary in Parliament has the Alexandra Palace seen an event to match last night's MTV awards. The real action, however, was down in central London where pop stars jostled for the chic-est in accommodation.

The hairy-scaries of Oasis were staying in the Conrad International in Chelsea Harbour, the one attraction of which was that it remained free of other pop stars. Madonna, with child, went for the more adult Lanesborough in Knightsbridge.

The Artist formerly known as Prince chose the hotel still known as the Dorchester, while Simple Red and the Irish contingent — U2, Sinead O'Connor, Van Morrison — shacked up at the modish Portobello. Anouska Hempel's stark new bistro, The Hempel, had to make do with the George Michael party.

P-H-S



Just got your lottery grant, have you?

THE TIMES TODAY

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 15 1996

NEWS

Troops will be allowed to use force

■ British troops sent to Zaire to ease the plight of more than a million starving refugees will be able to shoot their way out of trouble if they are intercepted, MPs were told.

Amid fears that the death toll could rise to 20,000 a day in Zaire refugee camps by next week, Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, told the Commons that if the objective was to reach the starving and if people stood in the way "then those people must be prepared to face the consequences of their action".

Pages 1, 14, 15, 16

Major calms fears over freak inflation

■ John Major tried to dismiss Conservative worries over inflation by insisting that an unexpected surge last month, taking the headline rate from 2.1 to 2.7 per cent, was a statistical aberration

Page 1

Tax cuts not wanted

A majority of the public, including Conservative supporters, believe that Kenneth Clarke should not cut the basic rate of income tax in the Budget according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

Pages 1, 12

Dickensian slur

British resistance to an EU directive on working hours suggests a return to the sweat shops of Dickensian times. Jacques Santer the President of the EU Commission said:

Page 2

Cold reception

The Duchess of York hit a cold Manhattan on the latest leg of a self-publicity tour, only to be told that she was "Britain's most unwelcome export since Mad Cow Disease".

Page 3

So I'll finish

Mastermind, the television quiz show is to end in 1997. 25 years after it started with a question about a Picasso painting... Page 5

Kick killed girl

A single kick to the head by a 12-year-old girl was enough to kill Louise Allen, who was set upon as she tried to stop a fight on her way home from a funfair. Page 7

Carey warning

The Archbishop of Canterbury issued a pre-election warning to clergy of the dangers of claiming special authority for their politics and economic opinions... Page 8

Race riots

For the second time in a month, racial rioting erupted in St Petersburg, Florida, after a white policeman was cleared in the shooting that led to violence.

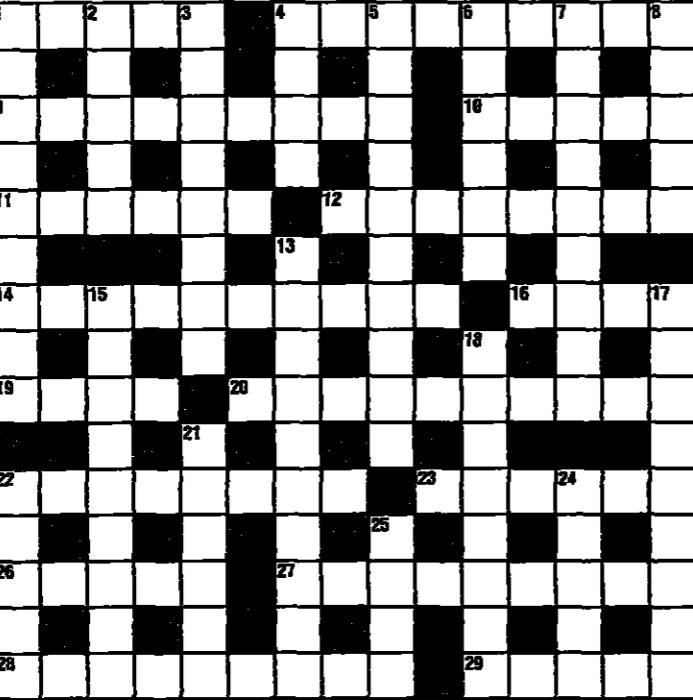
Page 17

Full marks for long holidays

■ Cambridge dons were accused of putting their Tuscany holidays before trigonometry, when they rejected a proposal to add a week to the summer term. The university council had recommended an extension of the seven-week term to give students more time for revision. But opponents argued that academics would lose research time.

Page 1

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,326



ACROSS

- Bluish-grey carpet (5).
- Water clock breaking down in dry places (9).
- Produced rose (6,3).
- Contract returning police force to its territory (5).
- American who wrote essay in verse (6).
- Boast about a post (8).
- Doubt - when one has it, it is unsettling (10).
- Missile hit pest (4).
- Type of skinflint, we hear (4).
- Temporal message archbishop is to put out? Quic the reverse (4,6).
- This sauce suited hard-hearted Louis originally (8).
- Stab female dropped before a programme (6).
- Sudden blow disordered thatch (5).
- Courage of everyone taking part in stand (9).
- Flighty vain girl - but chaste (8).
- More offensive in private (6).
- Sweep given medal, thus content (5).
- Name, say, given to American drink (5).
- Pure water (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,325

BLASPHEMER H S
A U C A E E X C E P T
F R A C T I O N N S E
V I R D O O R S T E P
A A P I T R H H
W E B B I M P E R I A T I V E
E L E S B C N
A B S E N C E I M P E T U S
V E E B I S D
E N T H U S I A S T P L A N
R P B I O G S
B R I G H T L Y A U E
U E H L A N D S E N D

Solution to Puzzle No 20,325

Times Two Crossword, page 48

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M25 and Link Roads 0336 401 747

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N West 416 338

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HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Aberdeen airport 13C (55F); lowest day temp: Lleida (Spain), Gloucestershire, SC (41F); highest rainfall: Cape Verde, Highland, 0.47in; highest sunshine: Eastbourne, 8.3in.

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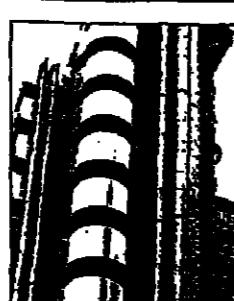
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 15 1996

BT says it's good to spend more on adverts

By ERIC REGULY

BRITISH TELECOM is to double its spending on advertising in an effort to defend its gradually shrinking market share.

BT would not provide details of its new advertising push, though analysts said the current budget is thought to exceed £100 million. Robert Brack, finance director, said: "It's a lot of money and it's going up. The advertising is working and we're being more aggressive."

Media executives said that BT had spent £91 million on TV, radio and advertising spots in the past year. That, however, excludes direct-mail campaigns and the costs of producing the advertisements. Doubling that figure would make BT one of the top five advertisers, along with Unilever and Procter & Gamble.

The company, where Peter Bonfield is chief executive, was encouraged by the success of the "It's good to talk" campaign and believes it is holding the line against the cable-telephony companies. In the half year to September 30, turnover from inland telephone calls rose 2.7 per cent, to £2.44 billion, while volume, on a year-on-year basis, grew 7 per cent.

James Ross, at Hoare Govett, said the gains represented a remarkable achievement. "Inland call volume growth seems to be headed for double-digit growth for the first time since the late 1980s."

Revenue increases from inland calls, mobile communications — BT owns 60 per cent of Cellnet, the second largest mobile-phone company — and its fledgling European businesses helped to boost turnover 4.5 per cent, to £7.36 billion, in the half-year to September 30.

But pre-tax profits, weighed down by a doubling in redundancy charges to £25 million and the £60 million premium paid on the repurchase of government bonds, slipped £7 million to £1.6 billion. Earnings per share were 16.3p (16.5p). The interim dividend, payable on February 17, rises 6 per cent, to 7.9p. BT has forecast total dividends payments of 19.5p, up 6.1 per cent for the year to March 31. Shareholders will also receive a 35p special dividend even if BT's proposed \$20 billion takeover of MCI collapses. BT shares rose 9p to 579.4p.

Pennington, page 27



Don Carty, left, president of AA, and Bob Ayling, chief executive of BA, at the time they announced the proposed link-up between the two carriers

Clarke faces clash over inflation leap

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

A SHOCKINGLY large rise in British inflation in October has set the stage for a damaging clash between the Chancellor and the Bank of England over interest rates in the run-up to the election.

Headline inflation leapt to 2.7 per cent from 2.1 per cent in September, while the underlying rate jumped to 3.3 per cent from 2.9 per cent, making the Government's target of 2.5 per cent or less seem even more difficult to hit. The underlying rate is now at its highest level since September 1993.

These rises came in spite of the fact that prices were unchanged overall between September and October. The annual rates jumped by virtue of prices having fallen sharply in October 1995.

Nevertheless, there was widespread disappointment in the City that a plunge in industry's prices over the past few months has failed to translate more quickly into lower prices on the high street.

The gap between the attitudes of the Treasury and the Bank of England on monetary policy appears to be widening. The Bank was sufficiently worried that yesterday's figures would provoke a negative market reaction that officials are believed to have telephoned some City economists, particularly those with relatively low forecasts for October inflation, to warn them that the figures would be bad.

While the Bank tried to preempt a negative market reaction before the event, the Government was working hard afterwards to put a positive gloss on the figures. John Major, the Prime Minister, said that the increase in inflation was "a statistical aberration".

The Chancellor and Treasury officials pointed out that the annual rates had gone up only because last October saw the largest fall in retail prices in any October since the war, whereas this October's figures

were only the fourth best since the war.

The Bank's efforts to warn traders beforehand, coupled with some good inflation numbers from America which boosted US stocks and bonds, meant that the negative reaction in London markets was only short-lived.

The FT-SE 100 index closed only 0.8 of a point lower at 3,926.1, having slumped as low as 3,904. British government bonds, which would normally react very badly to such a sizeable jump in inflation, actually ended the day almost a percentage point higher. The pound leapt, ending at 91.9 on its trade-weighted index compared with 91.3 on Wednesday.

Short sterling futures, the best guide to market interest rate expectations, fell before ending the day above their lows. Closing levels priced in a rise in base rates of between a quarter of a point and half a point. Base rates were raised a quarter of a point to 6 per cent at the end of last month.

The Chancellor next locks horns with the Bank on December 11. It seems likely the Bank will push for a further monetary tightening given yesterday's figures and this week's news of another hefty fall in unemployment. However, the Treasury's efforts to play down yesterday's figures suggest that another rate rise may not necessarily be forthcoming from Mr Clarke.

The main culprits behind October's jump in inflation were housing and motorising costs. Last October saw a sharp fall in mortgages, house prices and home contents insurance premiums against rises this year for mortgages and house prices and only a small fall in premiums. Petrol prices and motor insurance premiums were up this year against big falls a year ago.

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Anatole Kaletsky, page 29

GUS shares surge after US acquisition

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHARES in Great Universal Stores surged 10 per cent yesterday after it revealed that it had dipped into its huge cash pile and bought Experian, which had

been tipped as likely to join the stock market.

This leaves GUS, which is chiefly a catalogue retailer and owner of Burberry and Scotch House, with half its cash pile and horns wings of more than

Scottish Widows in Royal Bank link-up

By MARIANNE CURPHAY

ROYAL Bank of Scotland yesterday announced plans to link up with Scottish Widows, the mutual life and pensions company, but denied planning a full takeover or merger bid.

However, the move fuelled speculation that Scottish Widows might eventually become part of the bank, which owns Direct Line, the telephone insurer. RBS shares rose 14.5p to 493p. Scottish Widows has been tipped as likely to join the stock market.

George Mathewson, RBS chief executive, said it was impossible to rule out a future merger, but said: "At present, we have no intention of doing that." He added: "Scottish Widows is a mutual company and its customers have been

buying into that whole ethos. I believe there is a risk in breaking that arrangement."

Scottish Widows will design products, administer pensions and manage investments for Royal Scottish Assurance (RSA), the RBS subsidiary life company. The mutual will own at least 20 per cent of RSA and an unspecified stake in Direct Line as part of a joint venture in life insurance. The exact size of the stakes will be finalised in the next few weeks.

Dr Mathewson said that "a handful" of jobs would be lost in Scottish Widows. In February the mutual insurer said that it intended to shed 700 jobs in a cost-cutting exercise.

Temps, page 28

Temps, page 28

Big Mac poised to join Texaco war effort

By CARL MORTISHED

TEXACO is mounting a big push to gain market share in the UK petrol retailing market and its secret weapon is burgers, doughnuts and coffee. The American oil company has been in talks with McDonald's and has plans to expand rapidly the number of petrol station sites that contain McDonald's restaurants and drive-through sales

Texaco has been hurt badly by the petrol price wars. Like its peers it suffered losses as a result of Esso's Pricewise campaign and the struggle by the oil companies to prevent customers from filling up their tanks at the supermarket. Roger Ebert, managing director of Texaco's downstream business, admits that there were times when its petrol stations were making money from selling nonfuels more

Airline link-up flies into EU storm

By JON ASHWORTH

THE European Commission has launched a formal investigation into the planned link-up between British Airways and American Airlines. The Commission has written to the airlines, saying that the proposed alliance does not appear to be in the interests of consumers. They have 60 days in which to respond.

The move prompted speculation that a decision on whether to refer the proposal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would now be frozen for at least two months. This was swiftly denied. Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, changed the rules in July to enable UK authorities to study the proposed alliance under EU competition rules.

The move was designed to reduce the risk of discrepancies arising from two parallel investigations.

Commentators suggested yesterday that Mr Lang would be powerless to pass judgment on BA-AA while the EU was awaiting responses. However, this was denied by the Department of Trade and Industry, which said the move would have no bearing on the timing of any announcement. Mr Lang was simply required to communicate his decision to the Commission.

The Office of Fair Trading passed a report on the planned alliance to Mr Lang early last month. He has since been considering a referral to the MMC.

BA said that it was confident of satisfying the EC. Market research indicated that consumers favoured the link-up by a margin of seven to one, it said. A spokesman added: "We are confident that, once we put it to the EC, it [the alliance] will go ahead."

Letters, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

| | FTSE 100 | 3826.1 | (-0.8) |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------|
| Yield | 4.1% | (4.1%) | |
| FTSE All share | 1,025.55 | (-1.22) | |
| New York | 21,031.04 | (+51.60) | |
| Dow Jones | 8,263.50 | (+12.75) | |
| S&P Composite | 730.65 | (+2.02) | |
| | | | |
| Federal Funds | 5.75% | (5.75%) | |
| Long Bond | 1.09% | (1.09%) | |
| Yield | 6.45% | (6.45%) | |
| | | | |
| 3-month Interbank | 6.75% | (6.75%) | |
| Litis long gilt future (Dec) | 103.9% | (103.9%) | |
| | | | |
| New York | 1,685.05 | (1,685.05) | |
| London | 1,683.34 | (1,683.34) | |
| DM | 2,210.05 | (2,210.05) | |
| FFY | 8,484.63 | (8,484.63) | |
| SPY | 2,147.74 | (2,147.74) | |
| Euro | 184.53 | (184.53) | |
| E Index | 91.9 | (91.9) | |
| | | | |
| S&P 500 | | | |
| London | 1,569.95 | (1,569.95) | |
| DM | 5,100.05 | (5,093.05) | |
| FFY | 12,100.05 | (12,093.05) | |
| SPY | 111.30 | (111.30) | |
| E Index | 99.2 | (99.2) | |
| | | | |
| Tokyo close Yen | 111.83 | | |
| | | | |
| Brent 15-day Crude | \$22.40 | (\$22.35) | |
| | | | |
| London close | \$382.45 | (\$384.15) | |
| | | | |
| * denotes midday trading price | | | |

Water payout

South West Water, which escaped two bids last month, joined the ranks of utilities making big dividend increases. Its interim and final dividends will rise by 20 per cent. Subsequent rises will be 8 per cent.

Page 27, Pennington 27

PowerGen f1bn

PowerGen will soon have paid more than £1 billion in cash to shareholders in buying back PowerGen shares since privatisation.

Page 27, Pennington 27

HIGH INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNT

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Company cash flows out ahead of tax Nimble predators threaten BT Inflation poser answers its own question

THE more one opposes the unethical, if perfectly legal, notion of a windfall tax on utilities, the more one despairs of the behaviour of those companies on whom it will be levied.

The windfall tax, if it emerges under Labour and if — let us not forget that if — Labour wins the election, will not be described as retrospective taxation because Brussels does not like this. It will be a tax on unacceptably high bank balances, not a tax on the earlier profits that led to this state of affairs. Put this way, it is clear this is a distinction without a difference.

Retrospective taxation is not illegal anyway, because, ultimately, nothing is. Parliament can vote for such without hindrance, just as Parliament can vote to bring back hanging the gold standard or 80 per cent income tax — for everyone. The Americans who have brought into the electricity industry would probably sue, but precious little good it would do them in the courts because British constitutional law says government is elected to govern.

The Labour tax would do untold damage to inward investment and to big transatlantic mergers such as those that British Airways and British Telecom are now embarked

upon. This last is hardly reasonable; a Labour utilities tax was already predictable when the American buying started more than a year ago. But it will play well in terms of domestic US politics if reciprocal action to a tax grab is seen to be taken.

Yesterday, PowerGen, classed by Labour as a monopolistic utility for some strange reason, chose to distribute as much as £400 million to shareholders in the form of a share buyback, the fourth repurchase in the company's six years as a quoted company. South West Water, which has the power to carry out a similar exercise on behalf of its shareholders, hiked the dividend by 20 per cent. It is tempting to see such largesse as anticipating a utilities tax. But look a little deeper than that.

The level of dividend cover and gearing that was thought acceptable when the utilities were privatised turns out, with the benefit of hindsight, to have been over-cautious. In other words, the companies were sold too cheap — we all know that. The

City, which bought them too cheap, now says this means payouts should be jacked up to compensate for this — two slices of pie, please. Yet in this the institutions are only doing what Gordon Brown and Labour intend, except a little earlier.

But ask yourself three questions. Is Labour really going to hold off from windfall taxes because the companies have spent the money first? Is it proper corporate governance, if you know the tax is looming, to put the balance sheet in such a state that the company is in danger of collapse if it is levied? And what happens if the Tories win?

When it's good to be small

BRITISH TELECOM'S financial results were unremarkable except on two points. The "It's good to talk" TV ads starring the otherwise laconic Bob Hoskins have proved good value; customers are picking up the phone more often and talking

longer. Revenue from inland calls is climbing in spite of growing competition from cable.

The other point was less encouraging. International phone calls, BT's most profitable business by a long shot, are down, and by BT's own admission will continue to fall. The Government is set to break the BT-Mercury duopoly by awarding international licences to almost 50 new entrants. What is more, discount operators such as call-back services, which route international calls through the low-cost US, are proliferating. A free-for-all is in the making.

The same thing is happening on the other side of the Atlantic. The 1996 Telecommunications Act allows long-distance and local phone companies to compete in each other's markets. The golden era of AT&T, MCI and Sprint, the three giants that held a hammerlock on the long-distance market, is about to end.

Why, then, did BT just agree to pay more than \$20 billion for MCI? The deal makes sense in that the merger of the two creates a closed trans-Atlantic loop, meaning they will not have to pay other operators to complete their calls at the other end. As a result, they can retain more of the international call revenue for themselves. But this strategy can only buy so much time.

BT and MCI, for all their slimming efforts, are still big, old-time phone companies with enormous fixed costs. Since distance is quickly becoming irrelevant in determining the cost of calls, the time will come when BT and MCI cannot afford to drop their prices further without a radical restructuring. IBM is a good parallel, because Big Blue fell from grace when nimble new

companies such as Compaq introduced inexpensive alternatives to the mainframe computer.

What goes up must come down

INFLATION has risen sharply, but prices have stayed the same. The Chancellor is quite right to point out that prices were unchanged between September and October and that the shockingly sharp rise in annual rates of headline and core inflation was down to wonderful figures a year ago, the best inflation performance, indeed, since the war. But despite the truth of this argument, the fact remains that yesterday's figures mean the Bank of England will be fishing for another rate rise.

It is certainly disappointing that plunging producer prices have not fed more rapidly into lower prices on the high street. But, amid the mounting rates of inflation, let us put a counter argument. The main culprits for

October's ghastly numbers were petrol and house prices. Both phenomena are likely to be temporary. Oil prices have risen because of supply problems and are not a sign of rising commodity price pressures. House prices are up because confidence has finally been returning.

But the sudden disappearance of good fixed-rate mortgage deals after the recent hike in base rates shows how swiftly that could end if base rates are pushed even higher. Then factor in a populist cut in booze duties in the Budget to counter cross-Channel competition, cheer voters up — and depress retail prices. Then the latest inflation scare will prove to be short-lived.

Catch-48

HERE is a modest catch-22. You are a businessman rightly keen to avoid the imposition of the 48-hour week. Your opinion is sought by the media. Do you say, as some have, "No, it would never affect me anyway, I am a considerate employer and no one works that long here." This paints you in the best light, but it gives you no reason to oppose Brussels. Or do you say, "We can't have this. It would cripple my business — I make them all work 60 hours or more?"

Limelight offer price set at 175p

SHARES of Limelight, the fitted furniture manufacturer and retailer, have been priced at 175p, at the bottom of the indicated range, valuing the company at £175 million (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The offering will raise almost £60 million for Stephen Boles, former chairman and now a non-executive director. No new money for the company is being raised.

Trading begins today. Some 62.15 million of the 65.05 million shares on offer have been allotted under a placing, 2.86 million under an intermediaries offer, and the balance under an employee offer.

PowerGen payout lifts buybacks above £1bn

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

POWERGEN will shortly top the £1 billion mark in cash it has paid out to buy back its own shares since privatisation (see Pennington this page).

Yesterday it announced its second buyback this year, and the fourth since privatisation. When the plan to repurchase 10 per cent of the company's equity is complete, PowerGen will have rebought just under 30 per cent of its shares.

Earlier this year it paid out £346 million in a similar buyback justified by the company's profit on the sale of a stake in Midlands Electricity. However, the one-off gain on that sale was £69 million,

PowerGen did not fit the definition of a monopolistic utility that was price-regulated and had enjoyed excessive benefits from slack regulation.

Peter Hickson, finance director, admitted the balance sheet could sustain a windfall hit but that did not mean the company would not suffer from such an impact. Analysts are calculating a windfall tax on PowerGen of about £200 million.

PowerGen lifted underlying profits by 4 per cent, to £138 million, in the six months to September 30, after removing its one-off £69 million gain from its sale of a 21 per cent

stake in Midlands Electricity to Avon Energy.

The company said that it was close to ending its problems with Kinetica, its loss-making joint gas venture with Conoco, and expects to take a hit of no more than £69 million on its exposure to take-or-pay gas contracts.

Overseas operations, in which PowerGen is increasing its activities, did not deliver a contribution to profits, with none expected in the short-term. The interim dividend, payable on December 20, was lifted 20 per cent, to 7.8p.

Tempus, page 28

South West Water vows to follow up leap in dividend

By OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SOUTH WEST WATER, which escaped two takeover bids last month after a government veto, yesterday joined the ranks of utilities making big increases in dividends with a 20 per cent rise in its interim payment to 11.8p a share (see Pennington, this page).

The company also set out a stall for future dividend rises, saying that its final dividend would rise by 20 per cent and that growth thereafter would be 8 per cent.

South West, whose customers pay the highest water bills in the country, also said that it would buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares if it considered it to be in the best interests of its shareholders.

The company, which had

been targeted by Wessex Water and Severn Trent, attracted the wrath of Labour, which condemned it for making profits of £257 a minute. Frank Dobson, Labour's environment spokesman, further criticised the state of the industry that had led South West to spend £4.9 million fighting takeover moves from rival water companies.

Ken Hill, South West's finance director, said that the company's results showed sparkling growth in the face of two hostile bids.

The company would not say yesterday whether it had received other takeover approaches. Although a merger with another water company has been ruled out, a takeover by an electricity company could be a possibility.

South West has paid a £15 customer dividend, which will cost the company £10 million, although this charge will not appear until the final results.

South West's interim pre-tax profits to September 30 climbed to £72.9 million, from £54 million in the previous year. The figures exceeded the expectations of analysts, who had largely been working in a range of £60 million to £65 million.

Operating profits from non-regulated activities rose by 50 per cent, to £46.7 million. Non-regulated activities now account for nearly 27 per cent of overall profits.

The interim dividend is payable on April 7.

Have you heard?



Well, we couldn't keep it quiet for long. BP and Mobil are launching a joint venture, all across Europe. We'll be starting in the UK, at the beginning of November.

It means bringing every Mobil station under the BP umbrella, which will give us a network of almost 2,000 service stations in the UK alone.

With nearly 9,000 stations all across Europe,

it's a massive programme. We're confident that, by the end of '98, it will be complete.

It's a huge effort, but we know it's worth it to give our customers a better deal.

We believe the combination of Mobil lubricants and BP fuels is an unbeatable offer.

We aim to set the standards in friendly, efficient service.

Together with our commitment to excellence and competitive prices, our new network will really be offering the best of both worlds.

A further example of this will be Mobil's

hugely popular Argos Premier Points scheme. From January 20th it will be offered on every single BP and Mobil forecourt, giving the customer almost twice as many chances to

build up Premier Points.

We are building a great partnership here. It's a partnership of two companies who share a vision of the future.

We are confident that it won't be long before everyone understands what we mean when we say:

Together, we keep you moving.

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Shares end almost level after see-saw session

A STRONG performance by government securities, sporting gains of more than 1%, enabled the equity market to end a volatile session all-square on the day.

The appearance of bargain-hunters at the lower levels enabled the bond market to shrug off the effects of the latest gloomy inflation figures and stronger pound. Brokers say that it is only a matter of time before the Chancellor signals a further rise in base rates. However, that was tempered yesterday by the Bundesbank, which hinted that it might find scope for another cut in rates.

The equity market took its lead from the bond market, having seen an early 13-point lead wiped out and replaced by a fall of almost 23 points after publication of the inflation figures. In the event, the FT-SE 100 index ended a volatile session 0.8 down at 3,926.1.

Turnover of more than a billion shares was swollen by several large bed-and-breakfast transactions designed to establish a tax loss before this month's Budget. These included British Gas, up 9p at 207.5p, where volume reached 67.4 million shares as lines totalled 20 million went through the market.

There were also lines in Shell, down 4p at 97.5p, on turnover of 35.6 million shares, and Hanson, a firm at 79.5p, where almost 69 million shares changed hands.

Several profit downgrades left Standard Chartered 10p easier at 64p. ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, is thought to have cut its forecast for the current year by 50 million to £800 million. At the same time, Crédit Lyonnais Laing has cut its estimate for 1996 by £40 million to £800 million and for next year from £920 million to £890 million.

Both brokers take the view that Standard, which is often tipped as takeover target, may have run far enough for the time being, having peaked at 72p earlier this year.

Laird is urging clients to switch into National Westminster, up 5p at 68.5p, which it says are the cheapest in the sector. Royal Bank of Scotland hardened 5p to 494p after announcing it was in talks with Scottish Widows about areas of co-operation.

Shares of East Midlands Electricity edged 5p higher to 627.5p, but remain well below



Ladbrokes took a big hit after Frankie Dettori's record wins

the 670p a share being offered by Dominion Resources, the US power generator. City speculators remain worried that the bid will be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. By the close of business a total of 5.3 million shares had been traded.

The food retailers were chased higher on the back of some encouraging words from

Mercury Asset Management is being tipped to become a constituent of the top 100 companies. But the shares, at a high of 116.625p on Wednesday, fell 7.5p to 111.56p as one investor decided it was time to take profits. Brokers reported a bigline of 25 million shares on offer at 111.593p.

Charterhouse Tilney, the broker, Top of its shopping list appears to be J Sainsbury, 10p better at 351p, but there were also gains for Tesco, up 2p to 320.5p, Safeway, 4p to 357.5p and Asda, 4p to 118p.

The drop in profits at BT came as no surprise to the City. Pre-tax profits during the second quarter were down £2 million at £730 million after higher redundancy charges

3p lower at 195.5p after a positive trading update. Business in the third quarter was comfortably ahead of last year, in spite of taking an £8 million hit after the record seven wins in a day at Ascot by Frankie Dettori, the jockey.

The acquisition by Great Universal Stores of Experian, the US information services group, for £1.04 billion got a positive response, with the price climbing 57p to 638p. Sears, the Selfridges and Freemans retailer, says it is thinking of ways to return surplus cash to shareholders. The news emerged as the group sold its Enoch Shopping Centre in Glasgow for almost £80 million, netting a profit of £10 million. Sears slipped 1p to 88.5p.

The announcement of the deal saw shares of House of Fraser come off the boil, closing 2p cheaper at 42p. There had been talk earlier in the week that Burton, 3p firmer at 143.5p, might bid for the struggling retailer.

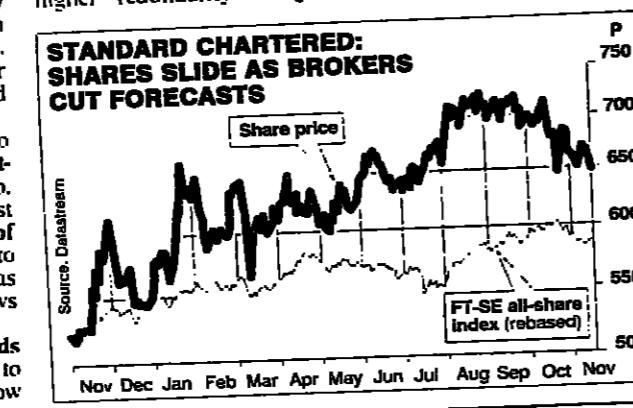
Nosey buyers pushed Full Circle 2p higher to 173.5p before interim figures later this month. The management holds 60 per cent of the equity and would reject any bid approaches. But the buyers have been tempted, having seen the price come back from a peak this year of 27p.

Business is booming at Pzson so it is raising £14 million by way of share placing of 3.5 million shares at 40p each. The money will finance expansion. BWZ, which placed the shares, has increased its profit forecast for 1997 by £2 million to £24 million. The shares rose 45p to 441.5p.

GILT-EDGED: Bargain-hunters and a hint that the Bundesbank might be tempted to cut interest rates enabled the bond market to end with some solid gains stretching to more than £1.

In the futures pit, the December series of the Long Gilt fell as low as £108.16, at one stage, signalling that the market was ripe to buy. It finished £4 higher at £109.16 as a total of 134,000 contracts were completed. In the cash market, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 advanced £2.32 to £101.74, while among shorter-dated issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 rose three ticks to £102.13.

□ NEW YORK: After a slow morning, Wall Street stocks rallied at midday. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 19.75 points to 6,293.99.



Source: Datamonitor

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday)

Dow Jones 6,293.99 (+19.75)

S&P Composite 733.65 (+2.52)

Tokyo Nikkei Average 21,031.04 (+51.00)

Hong Kong Hang Seng 13,004.80 (+61.11)

Amsterdam EOE Index 604.91 (+2.89)

Sydney ASX 2362.35 (+15.6)

Frankfurt DAX 2,777.01 (+3.58)

Singapore Straits 2,109.76 (+43.28)

Brussels General 10,153.09 (+76.29)

Paris CAC-40 22,18.18 (+0.94)

Zurich SCA Gen 813.70 (+5.30)

London FT 30 2,761.0 (+1.5)

FT 100 3,502.1 (+0.8)

FTSE 250 4,039.3 (+1.5)

FTSE Eurostar 10 18,116.76 (+1.49)

FT All-Shares 1,935.55 (+0.09)

FT Fixed Interest 1,111.37 (-0.03)

FT Govt Secs 9,381.55 (+0.13)

FTSE 100 2,202.1 (+0.18)

German Mark 91.9 (+0.04)

Exchequer rates 91.9 (+0.04)

Bank of England official close 1,2997

ECU 1,2997

LSDR 1,1550

RPI 1,153.8 Oct (2.7%) Jan 1987-100

RPIX 1,153.6 Oct (3.3%) Jan 1987-100

THE TIMES FRIDAY NOVEMBER 15 1996

TEMPUS

Credit, where credit is due

THE EUPHORIA that greeted the GUS purchase of Experian looks a tad overdone. There is no question that GUS needs to find a better home for £1.2 billion than low interest-bearing deposits. Indeed, Experian is in a fast-growing business — credit information and customer profiles — an area GUS growth will throw through its CCN subsidiary.

Information on customers is a hot commodity and frequently forms the basis of key business decisions: who to give credit to; where to site a new store or what new products to develop. Experian will make GUS a leading supplier of such information on both sides of the Atlantic, and should also help it to expand into developing countries.

Unfortunately beefing up one side of the business has the effect of exposing weakness in the other. Up to 20 per cent of profits will come

from the high-growth customer information, compared with 8 per cent before the purchase. Good news for shareholders but the fact remains that the core of GUS is still agency catalogue retailing which is fast losing market share to so-called direct mail order. In effect, telephone sales are supplanting face-to-face deals through local agents, the traditional backbone of the GUS catalogue business.

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, the chairman, knows direct mail order well through his chairmanship of Next. Given his influence and GUS's sheer size — it still has a market share almost twice the size of its nearest competitor in mail order — there is little reason to doubt that the company will refocus on the more exciting parts of the mail order business. But it has yet to make a move. When it does, euphoria will be in order.

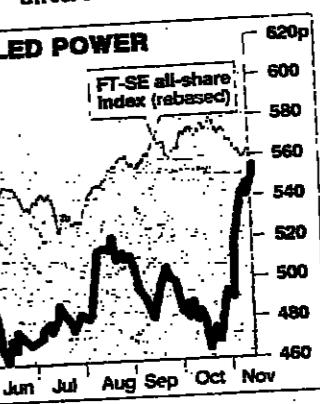
PowerGen

POWERGEN has been peddling a somewhat doomsday scenario to all who care to listen. The chief executive recently warned the trade and industry select committee that if its market share in electricity generation slipped below 15 per cent then PowerGen would be forced to abandon its overseas activities, retrench in Britain and cut jobs. All terribly bloody.

Yet today, the outlook is altogether rosier. Market share stands at 22 per cent, just six percentage points lower than its share at privatisation. Moreover, its share is unlikely to suffer much erosion from new capacity. The arrival of the army of new gas-fired generators has been much exaggerated. Rivals have been cautious in making the huge capital commitments needed for new power stations

and there is little sign that the generators are about to see their business decimated by American utilities. Similarly, the regulator has not yet shown any signs of relaxing the restriction on regional companies owning more than 15 per cent of their own generating capacity.

Despite the blocking of generators' bids for Recs,



growth in the UK is not a foregone conclusion. Despite frequent paybacks to investors, PowerGen still has plenty of financial clout and is expanding its upstream gas business. It is also seeking regulator-friendly love-ins with some Recs: a means of forging a link to domestic customers post-1998 if not direct access.

Royal Bank

AFTER several dalliances, Royal Bank of Scotland is getting serious with the girl next door. The bank was spurned by another local lass when Scottish Equitable, a previous partner, fell into the arms of Aegon, the Dutch insurer. Under its deal with Scottish Widows, Royal Bank gets a virtually exclusive arrangement with one of the UK's most desirable mutuals, without having to pay a takeover premium for the privilege.

Royal Bank is effectively handing over control of its life business to Widows, leaving its hands free to fend off English competition in the banking market. Its subsidiary, Direct Line, is underperforming the FT-SE All Share index by 15 per cent. It has lost its cherished Footsie status and an 8 per cent discount has opened up between its share price and its net asset value. A shocking state of affairs for F&C,

which had been a watchword for consistency based on a record stretching back over decades. Some relief came yesterday in the shape of the £18.3 million it will receive from Hypo-Bank of Germany — payment for the trust's share of its management company, Hypo Foreign & Colonial Management.

The cosiness of this relationship raises the odd concern, but the management company has undoubtedly been a highly successful investment. Hypo-Bank's first purchase in 1989 was its deal pitch price at £20 million. Yesterday's deal pitches the price at £20 million. Whether this will mark a wider recovery in F&C's fortunes is more doubtful. With 60 per cent of its money overseas, the trust has been hit by the strong pound. Although F&C's managers remain highly regarded, the trust will have little respite until the rise of sterling is checked.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

RIGHTS ISSUES

AG Holdings n/p 12/-

Bridport-Gundry n/p 1/-

Capital Shop 62.5% n/p 2/-

European Lets n/p 13/-

Perkins Foods 3/-

Springwood n/p 82/-

THE
TIMES

Late-runner pulls ahead

A BACKER for London Financial News, the hapless City trade magazine, is expected to sign on the dotted line today. In the end, it was a race between two rival bidders. A UK-based company, with interests in publishing, that had been in talks with Clive Wolman, the founder and Editor, when the magazine first fell into financial difficulty reappeared on the scene only days ago. By that stage, Wolman and his team were already in serious talks with another company. But with one whiff of a more immediate answer to their prayers, word has it that they plumped for the late-runner.

Rise of Rupert

RUPERT HESELTINE, son of Michael, is destined for greater things. Since his father recently upped his stake at Haymarket Publishing, there have been whispers in the corridors that it won't be long before Tarzan's son is promoted for the second time in two months. An account manager at the group's new publication, *Sky Sports*, the 28-year-old blond bachelor tells me that he knows nothing about plans for his promotion. However, an insider at the company says that a folder has been spotted entitled "What to do about Rupert."

Lawyers' beano
DIBB Lupton Alsop is off to London for a celebration beano this week, even though talk of staff cuts is at an all-time high at the newly merged Northern-based law firm. At least 190 partners will be staying at the Mayfair Inter-Continental. The total cost of the outing is said to be about £45,000. They will be meeting at the Mayfair this weekend, with a chartered coach to take them about, while their partners head for a pampering session at The Sanctuary in Covent Garden or to the West End show, *Servage*.



BY DINGO, Maurice Satchi is spreading his tentacles down under. His advertising agency, MSC Satchi has just won the A\$60 million (£30 million) account to persuade Australians "not to put another shrimp on the barbie but head down to McDonald's instead. Hopes are not high, though, that MSC can win the UK account.

Seeing red

ROWAN "Gatecrasher" Gormley, managing director of Virgin Direct, raised eyebrows on Wednesday night when he stormed into a party hosted by Standard Life. Posing as a journalist from a national newspaper, Gormley wandered into The Ivy and helped himself to his Scottish competitor's wine. But the Virgin interloper couldn't pull the wool over the eyes of his perceptive hosts. "Strip down and there'll be a red uniform underneath that suit," said a particularly cross Standard Life employee. Unashamed, Gormley continued to tuck into the canapés, but I'm told that he has finally invited the aggrieved employer to Virgin's Christmas bash.

MORAG PRESTON

If I were Chancellor I would raise taxes not interest rates

Inflation could be contained by using fiscal restraints as an alternative to monetarism

It is all very well to blame the Chancellor for raising interest rates and pushing the pound back towards its crippling level of the ERM period. But what else could Kenneth Clarke have done? Inflation is starting to accelerate. Consumer demand is strong and getting stronger. Unemployment is still too high, but wages are now rising quickly.

In a nutshell, as the Bank of England has rightly argued, something has to be done to prevent the economy taking off in another inflationary spiral. The question is whether that "something" should be to increase interest rates and push up sterling.

The rest of this article will argue that the policy of monetary tightening and currency appreciation chosen by the Chancellor will do grave damage to the British economy, and will outline the course that Mr Clarke should have pursued. That alternative can be described as the non-monetary approach to controlling inflation, or to put it less technically and more bluntly: a tough tax-raising Budget. And in case that still sounds like a fanciful "soft option", I will spell out in next week's Economic View some of the specific measures on taxes and public spending that could be announced as soon as this month's Budget, if Mr Clarke wanted to avert the disaster for British industry implied by his present course.

But first let us take a step backwards and consider the present predicament faced by Mr Clarke. After the figures on price and wage inflation published in the past two days there can surely be no doubt that interest rates will be pushed much higher if the Chancellor sticks to the Treasury dogma that monetary policy is the only tool that can be used to control inflation. If the Chancellor insists on remaining a monetarist "one-club golfer", as Sir Edward Heath once memorably described Nigel Lawson, base rates seem certain to rise by at least another 0.5 per cent between now and the general election – and by much more beyond that; especially if a Labour government, anxious to prove its anti-inflationary mettle, comes to power.

I would be very surprised if the present upward trend in interest rates were to come to an end before base rates reached 7.5 per cent or 8 per cent. That is roughly what the financial futures markets are now assuming and the minimum that would have a chance of reversing the trend in inflation, assuming that the Government does nothing else.

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EMU fears shrugged off by Bank of Ireland

FROM EILEEN McCABE IN DUBLIN

THE adverse effects of economic and monetary union on the currency market revenues of financial institutions will be offset by the better opportunities for asset management that will be available in the larger, more liquid European pool, the Bank of Ireland Group said yesterday.

Pat Molloy, chief executive, said it was difficult to quantify the effects of EMU membership on the bank, particularly since it is still unclear whether sterling will be in or out.

"I think the consensus is that sterling will not join initially. But I think that EMU will be good for Ireland, and

Biotech in drug deal in Japan

BY ERIC REGULY

BRITISH BIOTECH signed a \$74 million licensing agreement yesterday that gives Marimastat, its oral anti-cancer drug, access to the Japanese market.

Tanabe Seiyaku, Japan's eighth largest drugs company, will fund Marimastat development in exchange for exclusive Japanese marketing rights. Tanabe has paid British Biotech \$7 million and will give it another \$67 million over the next few years.

Marimastat is undergoing final trials before it receives approval for sale in Europe and in North America, where it should reach the market in 1999. Japanese approvals are unlikely to 2003.

The deal marks one of British Biotech's first partnerships. In Europe and North America, its policy is to develop the drugs itself.

what's good for Ireland is good for a bank with its core business in the Republic," he said.

The Bank of Ireland, which is acquiring the UK's Bristol & West Building Society for £600 million, reported pre-tax profits little changed at £103.1 million, compared with £103.6 million, broadly in line with market expectations. Earnings slipped slightly to £25.2p a share from 25.7p.

The group incurred a \$8 million one-off restructuring charge when it merged First Holdings, its US operation, with Royal Bank of Scotland's Citizens Financial Group, in which it now holds 23.5 per cent stake.

Group earnings were also adversely affected by an 11 per cent fall in profits in the treasury division to £136.9 million. Mr Molloy blamed the drop on a more difficult market environment and on lower loan loss recoveries in corporate banking.

On the retail side, Boi increased its volume of business in both lending and deposits. Total lending was ahead 11 per cent, with residential mortgages growing particularly strongly. The division recorded a 6.4 per cent increase in profits to £104 million.

A 15 per cent increase in profit to £62 million by other activities, such as life assurance and insurance, was secured by improved sales of its products.

Mr Molloy said that Boi was going through a period of change in its structure and outlook which he believed would leave it stronger in the future.

He said he hoped the acquisition of Bristol & West, which is announced in April, will be completed by the middle of next year. Bristol & West is the UK's ninth-largest building society.

The interim dividend is increased from 15p a share to 16p.



Good news: Charles Brims announced an increased payout in spite of a fall in profits

Newspaper group optimistic

BY CLARE STEWART

PORSCHE & SUNDERLAND Newspapers, the regional newspaper publisher and printer and convenience store operator, suffered a 3 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £4.68 million in the half year to September 28.

In spite of the fall, Charles Brims, chief executive, said: "We are very pleased with these results. We are exactly in line with where we said we would be." Mr Brims said the company is investing about £50 million in expanding its activities in retailing and printing.

Group operating profits rose 4 per cent to

£4.99 million. A 6 per cent growth in advertising revenues to £17.3 million from regional newspapers, such as *The News* in Portsmouth and the *Sunderland Echo*, helped offset the impact in the first half of higher newsprint costs and losing the contract in 1995 to print *The Independent* in Portsmouth.

The company is increasing the interim dividend from 3.8p a share to 4.25p, payable from earnings of 2.7p a share, up from 2.5p last time. Yesterday's results saw the share price climb 5p to 730p.

Ricardo declines to explain dismissal of chief

BY MARTIN BARROW

CHRISTOPHER ROSS has been dismissed as chief executive of Ricardo Group, the automotive engineering and design company, it emerged yesterday.

Mr Ross, 52, had been removed from office "with immediate effect", the company said. He is believed to be in line for a payoff of between £400,000 and £450,000.

Mr Ross, who was appointed four years ago, was on a two-year contract, with an annual salary of £215,000, although his total package, including pension benefits, amounted to £325,000.

Ricardo declined to comment further on the reasons for his departure but indicated that it was not connected to the company's trading performance. The company's trading performance has been unchanged since the annual meeting on November 1, when Sir Philip Foreman, the chairman, told shareholders that he expected Ricardo to continue to make steady progress.

In September, the group reported a fall in pre-tax profits to £4.7 million, from £6.2 million, after disposal costs of £870,000. Turnover in the year to June 30 jumped from £85.9 million to £102 million.

At the time of the results, Mr Ross said that the group had taken action that would cut profits in the short term but leave the group in better shape for the future.

Ricardo had invested heavily, he said, spending £8 million mainly on improved test facilities and computers in Britain and in America. In addition, research and development spending had risen from £2.5 million to £3.2 million. Borrowings had climbed from £1.5 million to £6.7 million.

Ricardo shares were unchanged at 113.5p yesterday. Mr Ross is succeeded as chief executive by Rodney Westhead, who has been the group's finance director since 1992. John Baker, who is currently managing director of Ricardo Consulting Engineers, joins the board as an executive director.

Asian demand lifts Oxford Instruments

STRONG DEMAND from Japanese and East Asian markets helped Oxford Instruments, the manufacturer of body-scanning equipment for hospitals and superconducting magnets, to register a record level of new orders in the first half, rising by nearly 10 per cent. First-half sales though, showed a more modest growth, increasing by 2.3 per cent to £67 million, while pre-tax profits rose 5.5 per cent, to £9.5 million. The dividend is up 10.5 per cent to 2.1p.

The profits rise failed to meet City expectations and Oxford shares fell 21.2p to 470p. Oxford Magnet Technology, the joint venture company with Siemens that makes equipment for scanners, saw profits fall to £2.4 million, from £3.03 million. Peter Williams, chairman, said that continued political pressure on healthcare costs in markets such as America had affected demand for products. Overseas sales make up 87 per cent of turnover, with Japan the second largest market after America.

Hamleys boss sells stake

HOWARD DYER, chairman of Hamleys, the toys retailer, has sold about a fifth of his holding in the company for £1.36 million. He retains a 5.7 per cent stake. The sale, the first significant disposal Mr Dyer has made since Hamleys floated in 1994, was made to raise capital for a house purchase. Mr Dyer disposed of 317,000 shares at 42.5p per share on November 13. The shares dropped 10p to 42.5p yesterday.

Café Inns sales up

CAFÉ INNS, the pub company listed on the Alternative Investment Market, said yesterday that it had shrugged off decline in its sector with sales growth of 10 per cent in the six months to September 2. But compared with last year, which saw a gain of £170,000 from its now disposed of tenanted inns subsidiary, pre-tax profits stood at £283,000 against £331,000. Michael Norris, finance director, said that the company would add five more managed houses by the end of next year.

Action beats forecast

ACTION Computer Supplies Holdings, which achieved a stock market listing by reversing into Standard Platform Holdings in July, achieved pro-forma profits of £2.058 million after tax in the year to August 30, almost 6 per cent ahead of its own forecast at the time of the change. The company, which supplies information technology products by mail order, said that turnover rose nearly 32 per cent to £134.6 million. The company has net cash of £1.2 million.

Megalomedia buy plan

MEGALOMEDIA, the media and recruitment services company led by Lord Saatchi, is to continue to seek investments in complementary businesses. In August it acquired holdings in Webmedia, a Web site design company, and Netnames, an Internet name-registration service, to add to The Multimedia Corporation and Cybercafe. In the six months to September 30, pre-tax profits rose to £88,000, from £39,000. Earnings were 1.14p a share (0.49p). Again there is no dividend.

Lynx leaps ahead

LYNX HOLDINGS, the computer software and services company, achieved a strong rise in pre-tax profits to £6.95 million from £2.56 million, in the year to September 30, helped by a contribution from Vistec Group, the computer services business acquired in October 1995. Earnings rose to 5.36p a share, from 4.7p. The total dividend is increased to 1.75p, from 1.55p, with a final dividend of 1.5p, due to be paid on February 3. Lynx said it continued to seek growth through acquisitions.

Radstone cuts losses

RADSTONE TECHNOLOGY, the manufacturer of digital electronic equipment, said yesterday that it expected to return to profit in the 1997-98 financial year. The company said a strong recovery in the order book to £16 million was beginning to translate into an improved operating performance. In the half-year to September 30, pre-tax losses were reduced to £1.41 million, from £2.63 million. Losses were 9.1p a share, reduced from 13.43p.

THE TIMES

MUSIC SHOP

10 great hits for just £1

The Times Music Shop is a new service to readers and to launch it we have an incredible sampler CD for only £1, courtesy of Virgin, a leader in the entertainment industry.

This exclusive CD features some of the best hits by the biggest artists of the last few years (see track listing) and is available to readers on collection of four differently numbered tokens from *The Times*.

Manic Street Preachers have moved from devastation to success with their guitar epics; Deacon Blue, named after a Steely Dan song, marry wit and melody; former boxer Terence Trent D'Arby maintains the standard of his impressive debut; Sophie B Hawkins taps a nerve with her raunchy love song; and Des'ree, who appeared from nowhere, is now a huge hit here and in the States.

When you order this compilation CD you will get a brochure containing a selection of 40 CDs,



The Times/Virgin Entertainment Direct CD track list

SPIN DOCTORS Little Miss Can't Be Wrong
CYNDI LAUPER Girls Just Want To Have Fun
MEATLOAF Dead Ringer For Love
THE BANGLES Manic Monday
THE STRANGLERS Always The Sun
MANIC STREET PREACHERS From Despair To Where
DEACON BLUE Real Gone Kid
SOPHIE B HAWKINS Damn, I Wish I Was Your Lover
TERENCE TRENTR D'ARBY If You Let Me Stay
DES'REE Mind Adventures

You can order as many CDs as you wish and postage and packing is FREE. If you are unhappy with your order for whatever reason, we will exchange your goods or refund your money in full.

If you wish to order outside office hours, you can leave your order and credit card details or leave your number and we will call you back.

All you have to do is call our special order line any time between 8am and 7pm seven days a week (the number was published in *The Times* yesterday) when staff will be able to help with your order.

Or, if you prefer, you can place your orders using the freepost address: *The Times* Music Shop, Freepost SCO 681, Forres, IV36 0BR.

Paper drop hits Scapa

A WORLDWIDE downturn in paper production held back profit growth at Scapa, the paper printing supplier (Fraser Nelson writes).

David Dunn, Scapa's chief executive, said non-paper activities — almost 50 per cent of business — delivered a stronger performance, with operating profits up £3.3 million to £14.9 million.

Overall pre-tax profit was 9 per cent ahead, at £30.2 million, for the six months to September 30, on sales up 7 per cent, at £265 million. Earnings were 8.6p per share (7.9p). An interim dividend of 1.92p (1.79p) is due on February 3. Analysts downgraded year-end forecasts from 7.72 million to £62 million.

Shanks is given boost by recovery at Rechem

BY KEITH RODGERS

SHANKS & McEWAN, the waste management group, achieved a 7.3 per cent rise in profits before tax to £11.6 million in the half year to September 28.

The figure, which was slightly above expectations, was aided by a turnaround at Rechem, the incineration business, which reported a £600,000 operating profit against a £100,000 loss for the same period last year. Increased waste collection volumes and an improvement in the company's electricity generation business also offset an increase in landfill costs.

Hoare Govett, the company's broker, raised its full-year profit forecast from £20.7 million to £22.7 million, partly as a result of a contract to handle contaminated material from the millennium site at Greenwich. A bottleneck in the rendering industry created by the SSE cull has also allowed Shanks & McEwan to pick up a number of spot landfill disposal contracts for other animal carcasses.

The company said it is too early to judge the impact of the landfill tax introduced on October 1, but said it will maintain a range of waste services including recycling facilities. Earnings per share climbed 6.6 per cent to 3.9p. The interim dividend, payable on January 6, rises to 1.5p a share from 1.2p. The company has a net cash balance of £2 million, and Michael Averill, group chief executive, said it would continue to look for acquisitions after making five purchases so far this year.

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Gilts higher, equities steady

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

| | High | Low | Company | Price | Yield | P/E | High | Low | Company | Price | Yield | P/E | High | Low | Company | Price | Yield | P/E |
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■ THEATRE 1

Rostand's couplets are put through a Glasgow mincer in *Communicado's* bracing *Cyrano de Bergerac*



■ THEATRE 2

Lynn Redgrave muses poetically on her relationship with her daddy in *Shakespeare For My Father*



■ OPERA 1

The Guildhall students sing Cavalli's *Calisto* well enough, but miss the humour



■ OPERA 2

... but British Youth Opera enters with gusto into Vaughan Williams's *Sir John in Love*



THEATRE: Rumbustious Scots let Cyrano slip from their grasp; Lynn Redgrave looks for paternal love

How to blow a Frenchman's nose



Conked out: Tom Mannion gives a credible performance as Cyrano but the production lacks pathos

DONALD COOPER

The young Buñuel described Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* as "two films glued together by their bellies", and a similar comment could be made of Edmond Rostand's remarkable yet ridiculous "heroic comedy". One half of this monster presents the potentially fruitful story of a frightened man expressing his feelings for the woman he loves by composing letters for another man to send her in his own name. The other half can only repeat the 19th century's tired old fantasies of undying and selfless love. The genuine dramatic output of the first is frustrated away in the soppiness of the second.

Communicado, the Scottish-based company that exhibits such a splendidly vigorous response to classic texts, boldly translating them into a broad local idiom and generally larking about the stage in uninhibited joy, has squeezed Ros-

Cyrano de Bergerac Almeida

tand's couplets through a Glasgow mincer. Edwin Morgan (a Scot despite his surname) turns the mincer's handle and the result is a rumbustious, quirky rhyming version that tosses the dialogue back and forth so giddily that sometimes three speakers contribute to a single line.

The rhymes can be groaningly dreadful. "You've made too many enemies," a friend tells Cyrano, who replies: "Why, how many tonight became venomous?" Morgan even comes up with a rhyme for his hero's name when Fiona Bell's Roxane, arranging for him to miss the Siege of Arras, admits that "I'll kill for scratching his war, I know". It sounds almost passable in the Scottish.

Gerry Mulgrew's direction works hard to be imaginative as the new text. Costumes cover a range of four centuries, from the Louis XIII wig and cloak of Rob Pickavance's suave Comte de Guiche through caps of liberty and a 1920s vamp to the studded leather jackets of the hyperactive cadets of Gascony. In the baffling first act, where characters with names like Carbon de Castel-Jaloux come and go, Mulgrew makes it difficult to tell what is actually going on. Who are these people? When will the plot begin?

Gordon Davidson's sets, consisting of endlessly rearrangeable wooden shapes, suggest a similar restlessness, though it is enjoyable to watch them being turned around so that fairground booths become a pastry cook's shop-windows, Roxane's balcony, the redoubt at Arras and finally the cloisters where the widowed Roxane mourns her dead

JEREMY KINGSTON

I want to be Daddy's girl



DONALD COOPER

At first it looks like a moon seen through haze. Then the silvery shape on the black curtain behind the Haymarket stage becomes a bit brighter, and is vaguely recognisable as the face of the man Lynn Redgrave is about to celebrate from down front. It belongs to her father, and comes and goes during her one-woman show. And that is as it should be, for Lynn's message is that Sir Michael was inscrutable, faintly discernible through the clouds, never someone easy to reach or openly to love.

Redgrave's *Shakespeare For My Father* has had considerable success in America, but has taken its time to reach the city and one of the theatres where Sir Michael established himself as the most emotionally ravaged of the great actors. It was worth the wait, for it combines wit, technical skill and human feeling. The format, in which Redgrave slips intermittently from reminiscence to Shakespearean speech, sometimes seems a mite contrived. But who cares, when she effectively communicates her desperate yearning for a father who was a father rather than a series of gorgeous roles?

She cuts a fine, sure figure these days, but as a child she thought of herself as "round and glum, like a mushroom". When she was born, her father's diary mentioned lunching at the Garrick but not her arrival. When she was Theseus in a school play, the seat reserved for him stayed empty. He was a daunting, charismatic figure she hero-worshipped from afar, but only towards the end, when he was succumbing to Parkinson's disease.

did she and he appear to have exchanged words of love. The evening is sometimes heart-churning, but laughter is never far off. Sometimes this is blackish, as when the dying Michael believes his hospital bed to be a stage fended off by curtains through which it is unprofessional to peek. But often the memories are straightforwardly funny. For instance, Redgrave recalls an anxious Noel Coward begging the cast of *Hay Fever* to treat the difficult Edith Evans as a harmless old cow: "Come along, carrots and sugar for Edith!"

Redgrave is a good mimic and

Shakespeare For My Father Haymarket

gives nice impressions of Evans, Olivier and Tony Richardson telling her to play Helena in *The Dream* "as a giraffe". As the Viola who cannot tell her love, or the forgiving Cordelia, she makes you feel it is a pity she has tackled Shakespeare so seldom. But the evening is less about herself than about her search for her dad. Did you know that Sir Michael's recurring nightmare was looking into a dressing-room mirror before going on as Hamlet, and seeing his make-up and his face pour down his chest, leaving a blank in their place? If he eluded his daughter, he also eluded himself.

BENEDICT
NIGHTINGALE

Lynn Redgrave in the shadow of Sir Michael: wit and feeling

OPERA: Good music but poor taste from a student version of Cavalli; exuberant fun from Vaughan Williams; and a banal computer-generated premiere

All straps and studs

La Calisto Guildhall School of Music and Drama

HUMOUR is a funny thing at the best of times. Latino-Mediterranean humour is funnier than most other sorts, and something that Anglo-Saxons find it hard to reproduce. Giovanni Faustini's libretto for Cavalli's *Calisto* (1651) is wickedly witty and sophisticated, its tastelessness tastefully understated.

Both Peter Hall and David Freeman in their very different ways found a kind of matching style in earlier stagings, but in the hands of the GSMD's production team the anarchic gender couplings set off by Jove's disguise as Diana emerge as merely dour and mucky. A vein of fetishism in the costumes seemed inappropriate — Jove wore shiny high-heeled boots — and the Sylvens' beating-up of Endymion was downright offensive. Call me old-fashioned, but some things are best left to consenting adults in private.

Musically the evening is rather happier. Nicholas Kok conducts Paul Daniel's performing edition, originally made for Opera Factory, with

fluent ease, and the small ensemble — just two violins plus continuo — produces a properly authentic sound. It was bold to perform the opera in Anne Ridder's English translation given that half the principals were from abroad; I suppose that the way things are going nowadays only foreigners can scrape together the fees, a nice compliment to our colleges but perhaps not what they are primarily designed for.

Singing 17th-century opera in so pure an edition certainly separates sheep from goats. This has less to do with nationality or clarity of diction than with actually thinking the words and what they mean. Emer McClellan led the field with her crisply projected Juno, every consonant neatly in place, every line milked for its meaning through velvety, firmly

moistened mezzo tone. The Lithuanian soprano Liubov Chichrova matched her in clarity and communicativeness as a burly Sironino, and William Purley's Endymion was equally immediate in delivery; his counter-tenor is forward and bright rather than hoity-through-the-head.

There were other fine voices on show, but with impressive vocal rather than communication cords. The Swedish soprano Magdalena Brattland fielded gleaming tone as Diana, and her compatriot Marie Birve was only marginally less accomplished in the title role (a clear top, as yet cloudy bottom). The German-born Panito Iaconomo boomed sonorously as Jove, and the Australian tenor Christopher Saunders displayed an ease in the upper register that should stand him in good stead in the French Baroque repertory.

Those with a penchant for straps, studs and a bit of flounce might like to know that there are repeat performances today and tomorrow; those interested in Venetian opera may prefer to stay away.

RODNEY MILNES

Knight on the town

Sir John in Love Sheldonian, Oxford

of comic business worked far harder to engage the audience than did a note of Vaughan Williams's score itself.

With not a second of music to woo us over to his side, Andrew Shore simply rode through his robust and fulsome writing with confidence and flair. No matter, either, that Fenton's lovesong to Anne was undercut by the singalong chorus: Andrew Mackenzie-Wicks's ardent tenor and Helen Lotrian's clear soprano gave bright outline to their characters.

The fragrance of Vaughan Williams's pot-pourri of nine folksongs-for-the-spotting, extra Shakespeare ditties, and odd petals from other men's flowers (Jonson, Middleton and Marlowe) constantly distract the listener from emotional engagement. Yet Joanna Campion as Mistress Quickly (a lustful mezzo talent to watch out for), Louise Armit's lively Mrs Ford (she

has the famous *Greensleeves* plum), and Henry Moss's elegant tenor Slender worked particularly hard to animate their cameos. For all its frustrations and longueurs, *Sir John* was a cunning choice for the many young and eager

voices of British Youth Opera and, thanks to the outstanding playing of the Oxford University Chamber Orchestra, provided an evening of unexpected rewards.

HILARY FINCH

Which way to the exit?

The Master and Margarita The Place

THREE weeks of opera, music theatre and contemporary music at The Place began inauspiciously with a new opera of rare mediocrity, *Hilary Finch* writes. New Millennium Opera took it upon itself to present the premiere of *The Master and Margarita*, a numbing tribute by Darryl Way (of Curved Air fame) to Mikhail Bulgakov's surreal and satirical novel.

Inspired by David Graham-Youngh's stage adaptation, Way sought to enhance the tale by adding music. Here are the extraordinarily imaginative and Chagall-esque images of Pontius Pilate watched by a poet in Gorky Park; of black magic at the Moscow Variety Theatre; of flying

witches and informing black cats. And all dragged down by a lazy, unselfcritical score in which quasi-minimalist figures chunter endlessly below long stretches of ill-directed dialogue, drab melodies, limited chord sequences and unchanging tempos.

The entire score is keyboard and computer-generated, and prerecorded, to which the singers sing along. Save a limping waltz-song for Margarita (Fiona Rose) and an embarrassing dance in the

flat of the sinister Woland (Deryck Hamon), characterised by an unchanging four beats. They are conducted by Mark Elderington, who sits rigidly in front of a keyboard which he never touches.

A narrator (Thomas Whealey) and a series of light-projected backdrops narrate the drama which the score, and Graham-Youngh's inept production, are important to convey. Poor Master, poor Margarita. And poor little Lauren and Rosie who, the programme tells us, heroically stayed "out of Daddy's studio when he was working". One second spent in their presence would, I suspect, have been worth more than this two-hour celebration of banality.

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■ POP 5

The Lightning Seeds invite the listener to hum along on their latest release, *Dizzy Heights*...



■ POP 6

...while the Pink Floyd veteran Rick Wright makes his most determined bid yet to find stardom as a soloist



■ POP 7

Singer Kevin Salem delivers plenty of raw, old-fashioned rock'n'roll on his new *Glimmer*



■ POP 8

...and Johnny Cash assembles the most extraordinary range of material ever marshalled by a country singer

POP ALBUMS: More artifice, less heart from the Lightning Seeds – so David Sinclair puts all his money on Cash

We won't miss the prime of Ian Broudie

LIGHTNING SEEDS
Dizzy Heights
 (Epic 460640 £13.99)

WHEN they write the history of Britpop, the Lightning Seeds will be remembered as one of those groups who, despite their stature at the time, cast virtually no shadow. Rather like ELO in the 1970s, Ian Broudie and his cohorts effortlessly distil a shrewd songwriting skill into quality three-minute pop tunes that fit seamlessly into the current scheme of things. But no one will ever cite them as an influence or suggest that they were one of the prime movers in events going on around them.

Like *Joy Division* before it, *Dizzy Heights* is an undemanding collection of songs, crisply produced by Broudie, Simon Rogers and Dave Bascombe, that invite the listener to tap a toe or hum along, but which betray a lack of original inspiration.

Broudie's bright, personality-free singing style is perfectly suited to lyrics which sound dramatic, but actually say very little. "Instead of making me glad/it's driving me mad," he sings in *Fingers and Thumbs*, one of the more cleverly organised numbers.

Even when he does get his teeth into something more substantial, such as Nicky Wire's typically hangover-lyric to *Waiting for Today to Happen* or the barbed musings of *Sugar Coated Iceberg* (co-written by Babybird), Broudie still makes the whole thing sound uninterestingly like business as usual.

RICK WRIGHT
Broken China
 (EMI 8 53645 £15.49)

FOREVER cast in the bridesmaid's role when it comes to writing for Pink Floyd, keyboard player Rick Wright makes his most determined bid yet to reach the altar with his third solo album. A slowly



Business as usual from Ian Broudie (second from left) and the Lightning Seeds on their latest waxing, *Dizzy Heights*

unfurling odyssey which explores the frankly unpromising theme of depression – from its childhood origins to the fragmentation of personality which ensues in adult life – *Broken China*'s sombre tone and measured gait will be familiar to Floyd fans, if a somewhat daunting prospect for anyone else.

The lyrics, written by former Floyd collaborator Anthony Moore, are sung for the most part by Wright apparently masquerading as an undertaker. Apart from a momentary uplift at the end,

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| 7 Falling Into You | Celine Dion (Epic) |
| 8 If We Fall in Love Tonight | Rod Stewart (Warner Bros) |
| 9 Christmas Party | Smurfs (EMI TV) |
| 10 Ocean Drive | Lighthouse Family |

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they conjure an unremitting sense of gloom, and even Sinéad O'Connor, who sings two of the tracks, seems emotionally overwhelmed by such dolorous lines as "I know it's not terminal/But I'm near half-dead with fright/And

freezing cold." So, although sumptuously played and presented, this is not an album that brings much cheer, sensual or otherwise.

KEVIN SALEM
Glimmer
 (Roadrunner RR 8577 £15.49)
 A BLUESY guitar chord sidles up to the note, a ready harp monica blows like the ghost of Dylan past, and then a throaty American voice starts singing: "They shoot down angels around here for laughs/Bury dark horses just for running past." Liberally laced with

soaring guitar breaks and bolstered by the rhythm guitar playing of *Crazy Horse*'s Frank "Poncho" Sampedro, the song, which is called *Run Run Run*, is just about the perfect opening shot for an album of raw, old-fashioned, desperado rock'n'roll. It is certainly not the sort of thing you would expect to hear from a singer called Kevin.

Salem has played with a succession of critically acclaimed under-achievers, notably Dumplin' Freedy Johnston and Yo La Tengo, as well as producing the debut album by Madder Rose. His second album in his own right, *Glimmer*, is the song-writing craft of Paul Westerberg with the gung-ho spirit of vintage Neil Young (the album is produced by Young's former associate Niko Bolas).

While none of the ensuing tracks quite scale the dizzy heights of *Run Run Run*, there are some marvellous moments, especially on the slow, shambolic ballad, *Trouble*, where glistening clusters of notes from David Mansfield's pedal steel fall like tears on the dusty ground.

ed by Jimmie Rodgers in 1932. But it is the indomitable Cash himself, ably supported by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, who finds the nuggets of pure gold buried in so many unlikely places.

From the raw emotion of

Josh Haden's *Spiritual* ("Jesus, on Jesus, I don't wanna die alone") to the knockabout

humour of Geoff Mack's tongue-twisting *I've Been Everywhere*, Cash draws on every ounce of his experience, while displaying the performing vigour of a man half his age. *Unchained* is a tour de force, the like of which few of the younger country stars, let alone any of his contemporaries, could even contemplate.

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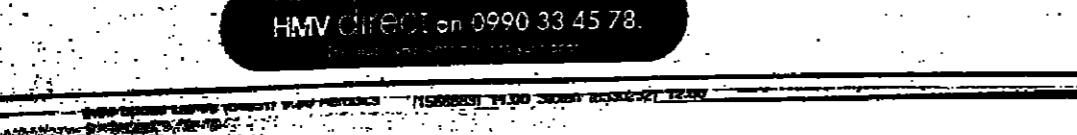
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AVAILABLE AT WH SMITH

Simon Midgley on Britain's apparent slide down the international mathematics league table

Are we failing by numbers?

Those who bemoan the state of mathematics in England's schools will have new and powerful ammunition next week. The main international comparisons in the subject will show pupils slipping back in relation to the rest of the world.

England will emerge as 3 per cent below the global average in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, having been 3 per cent above the norm in 1990. Among industrialised nations, only the United States approaches our poor performance in basic areas such as algebra and number work.

For some time there has been a widespread view that mathematics education is in crisis. Our schools, it is said, are producing pupils who are mathematically less able than their forebears, as well as their contemporaries abroad.

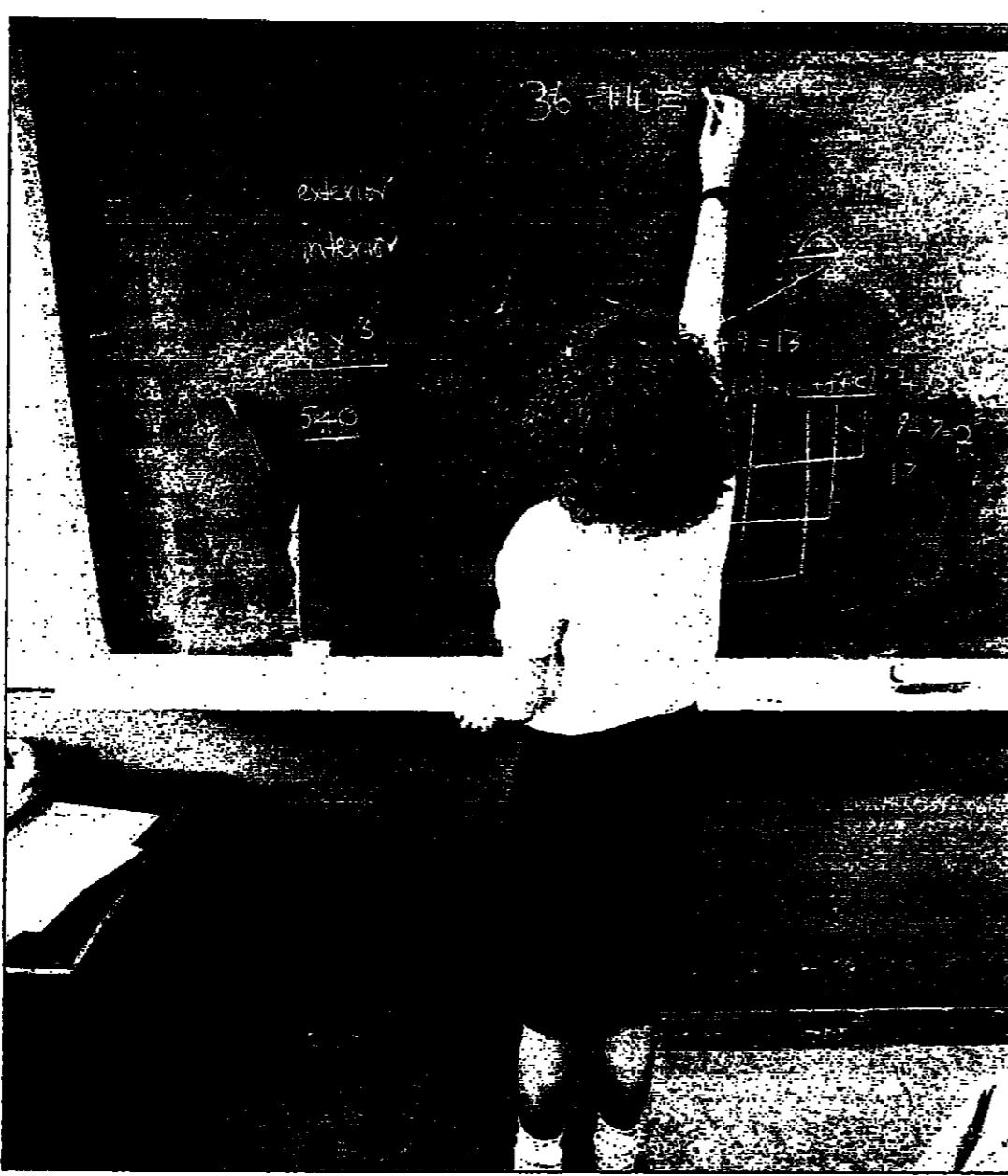
Children, so the critics would have us believe, are no longer able to do simple sums, and undergraduates lack many of the key mathematical skills they need to study science or maths at university level.

The apparently parlous state of contemporary mathematics is usually contrasted unfavourably with its historic golden age when children were taught the basic core skills. This 'idyll' is invariably followed by respectful homage to the mathematical achievements of students in the Asian "tiger" economies of the Pacific Rim countries.

Does this grim and crudely simplified picture bear any semblance to reality? The short answer seems to be yes and no. Last month a three-day symposium at the London University Institute of Education considered the state of mathematics education internationally. In particular it examined the question of how maths education needs to change if it is to provide the skills society will require in the new millennium.

Margaret Brown, of King's College London, highlighted the results of several studies in international achievement which showed that the vast majority of the population in the UK had a comparatively low attainment, either leaving school to after following an unambitious curriculum, or staying on in education but studying no further mathematics.

In the new Asian economies, Professor Brown added, the emphasis given to mathematics com-



Of developed nations only America approaches our poor performance in algebra and number work

bined with the decision to educate all to the highest possible level produced a significantly greater number of people with higher levels of mathematical attainment. However, the same surveys also found that in the UK a small elite had a very high mathematical attainment on leaving school.

Richard Noss, Professor of Mathematics Education at the Institute of Education, says that several of the widespread concerns about mathematics education are

well founded and might well be a consequence of the obsession with national curriculum tests and examination league tables in schools.

Key areas of mathematics, he says, have more or less disappeared from the curriculum — geometry, for example, and the idea of mathematical truths. For all but the very brightest pupils there has been a loss of a strong mathematical culture. It is as if people had stopped reading 20th-century novels or were unable to

appreciate the music of 19th-century composers.

A recent London Mathematical Society report suggested that there was evidence that even the very brightest students coming into universities had difficulty in following chains of logical argument. They were good at answering well formed questions but relatively bad at following an argument through.

Professor Noss says that he would not be surprised if the introduction of the national curric-

ulum in maths, examination league tables and national testing had reduced children's capacity to reason globally in maths and to develop a coherent view of maths as a way of thinking.

One of the effects of the national curriculum, he says, has been to break the maths curriculum into small fragments of knowledge which were then tested by single answer, right or wrong, easily marked examination questions. "It is hardly surprising if people do not emerge from their mathematics education with global reasoning skills and a coherent view of maths as a way of thinking."

Instead of national curriculum trammels, he adds, we need national curriculum guidelines to restore teachers' professionalism and creativity. School league tables should be abandoned in their current form, while retaining broad accountability to judge the success of the school system. Most importantly, Professor Noss believes that the status and professionalism of teachers must be restored, and their initial and in-service training improved.

At the seminar, lecturers from Taiwan and Korea expressed concern that mathematics education in their own countries emphasised computational skills, the manipulation of symbols and the memorisation of sets of rules to solve problems at the expense of encouraging students' ability to think creatively and develop mathematical solutions to problems they have not encountered before.

Britain, despite being outperformed by the Pacific Rim nations in many basic mathematical skills, does very well in creative, problem-solving mathematics. This talent for creative maths, Professor Noss says, may simply be nurtured by the existence in Britain of a generation of teachers who still teach maths as a creative subject.

Paradoxically, it appears, mathematical educators in several of the Pacific Rim nations are deeply envious of Britain's ability to nurture creative mathematicians and have profound reservations about their own nations' role-teaching approach to maths. In Britain, meanwhile, many politicians and some teachers look enviously at the computational achievements of students in the Far East. There is something, it seems, to be learnt from both approaches.

Parlez-vous Franglais?

Modern methods of teaching foreign languages are threatening standards

One of last summer's GCSE French papers included a Burger King advertisement depicting two burgers. The slogan is "I Whopper Achete = I Whopper Gratuit". The candidate has to explain in English what the special offer is.

It is now compulsory for every secondary pupil to study a modern foreign language from the age of 11. Yet if this is really the standard we expect our 16-year-olds to have reached after five years of teaching, surely something has gone wrong?

I still have my 1963 O-level French paper. It required me, among other things, to translate the far from straightforward sentence: "The whole family had come in the car to meet her and they all introduced themselves." The French/English translations include examples of the subjunctive mood and of the past historic tense.

I was taught the agreement of the preceding direct object — *La robe que fai une* — at around 13 and, well grounded in general grammar, recall no difficulty with it whatsoever. One of the current GCSE syllabuses describes the PDC rule as "... a structure which even French pupils find difficult. Although most pupils taking the examination will not be expected to produce this correctly, where pupils do use it, this will be taken into consideration." Who says standards haven't declined?

Comparing the rigour of an O-level modern language course with the transactional triviality of GCSE clearly indicates the insidious lowering of expectations in recent years.

My generation was systematically equipped to use French — and/or other languages — in any situation: formal as well as casual. We were therefore well prepared to embark later on the

reading of classic French texts in French, if we wished. Doors were pushed open for us.

GCSE modern languages teaching emphasises speaking and listening in "relevant" situations. Oral examinations are all strictly geared to specific and precisely laid down settings such as school, shopping, or food and drink.

The vocabulary lists which most GCSE boards produce are dangerous things. As soon as you catalogue the words which are required learning then you legitimise the perception that no student need know any words beyond the list. The more we knew the better, our teachers believed. Real education mattered as much as passing the exam. And, for the record, I didn't take French, or any other language, beyond O level.

What seems to have disappeared from school modern languages teaching — as from so much else in education — is precision, accuracy and depth. Translation into the target language, always the acid test, has gone. Much "reading" is just pictures with captions and, of course, the wonderful discipline instilled by the old dictation paper is ancient history.

Small wonder that John Gordon, of the University of East Anglia, reports soberly that of a recent intake of undergraduates reading German a mere eight out of 43 could translate the sentence "The teacher gave the pupil the book" into German. Only four could manage "I prefer to drink strong coffee".

Teaching every child in the land a modern foreign language is a deceptively attractive egalitarian idea.

In practice it seems to mean a shameful lowering of standards so that everyone can be included. What is a GCSE in a modern foreign language actually worth now?



SUSAN ELKIN

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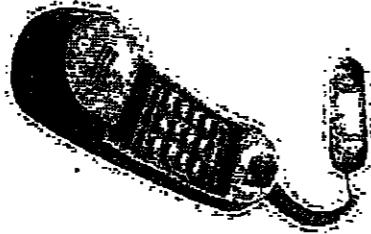
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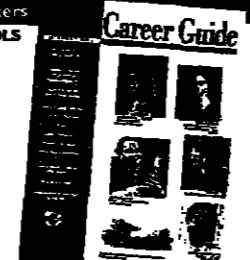
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When the parts are greater than the whole



Tests taken before the end of a course have the advantage of getting pupils to work harder earlier

The cane was once a useful deterrent

Andrew Collier on an effective, but now dated, punishment

The horror on a boy's face the other day, when he heard that I had used the cane, clinched my position in the debate on corporal punishment.

I did indeed use it or the slipper, as those then in authority did, on rare and, I suspect, very painful occasions. I would not have abolished its use, but I do not believe we can bring it back in the present climate. To argue for it in certain quarters would label me merely a backwoodsman. But to be seen as a monster is something different, and the misunderstandings in this view are too deep-rooted for restoration to be a practical option.

What today's pupils cannot understand is that it was as well understood a sanction as today's politically correct, properly agreed equivalents. Probably better. It was the known punishment for certain offences where something short and sharp seemed appropriate. This was unlikely to include bullying, the problems of which always were more serious and deep-rooted. Similarly, theft and dishonesty were usually too complex for so blunt a response.

It was usually used to punish unacceptable behaviour and rule-breaking, which needed dealing with and forgetting. Today's everyday offences were then quite unacceptable, and in that climate, a "quick six" was preferable to suspension.

I believe the boys I beat knew the risks they took, and what to expect. I did not shake hands or offer the so easily ridiculed "it hurts me as much as it does you" line, although I always ensured afterwards that the intention to "put it behind us" had worked.

I also know that it gave me no pleasure and allowed my reluctance to resort to this sanction to impose a moment of critical reflection into the business of the day. This seriousness, coupled with its rarity, made it a real deterrent and symbol of authority and right.

As today's history books describe a horrifyingly frequent use of cane, ruler or slipper in the inevitably "bad old days", it is unlikely that today's pupils will understand. I am also conscious that my experience, as teacher and pupil, was mild. I only inherited stories of regimes where the cane was in daily use, although I have met those who feel that their schooldays were blighted by it. They are to be taken more seriously than any of the "it never did me any harm" clichés, because their feelings are real.

I believe they are the exception, but there is no doubt that a number of heads and teachers did cane excessively, with little thought and, sometimes, with excessive delight. To them we owe the abolition and the horror which makes it irreversible. But I think it is



How would the cane-wielding teacher fare against the things and gangs resolved to defend or avenge their cronies? Do we want to fuel further playground wars and draw schools deeper into the confused area of condemning violence in any form?

Secondly, although corporal punishment was not illegal in independent schools, most abandoned it when it became unacceptable to some parents. You cannot run a fair system with double standards, punishing the same offence differently because of parental attitudes. This problem would now be insuperable; even a Cabinet full of Gillian Shephards would be unlikely to refuse parents a right to opt out.

Finally, the case against corporal punishment wins because most schools have proved they can cope without it. Discipline has not broken down everywhere. Yes, standards have changed, probably slipped, and attitudes to authority are not what they were. But there are a thousand reasons for this and most children still strive to avoid punishment. I believe the caning issue is an irrelevance. A political distraction and an election red herring.

**The writer is a former head teacher*

A survey of about 300 senior independent schools has found that most are in favour of modular A levels. No doubt sceptics will greet the news with derision, but there were good educational reasons for the schools' support.

The survey confirmed that students taking modular A levels achieve slightly higher grades than pupils taking the traditional "linear" route. But the schools, which included some of the most academically successful in Britain, generally did not subscribe to the barrage of criticism which has been directed at the new style of course.

The main objection to modular A levels appears to be that candidates take exams in bite-sized chunks. "Try a little bit of this exam" ran one mocking headline recently, suggesting that any examination taken in parts is less rigorous than one take at a single sitting. But there is nothing new about taking exams in ways other than by a battery of papers at the end of the course. Extended essays, project work and course work are all long established as legitimate forms of examination. The crucial point, as the survey emphasises, is that any test taken before the end of a course has the advantage of encouraging pupils to work harder earlier. Standards rise accordingly.

This is what so many people remote from the classroom fail to grasp. They seem obsessed with the

Peter Chappell challenges the notion that modular A-levels are lowering standards

idea that an exam which enables more people to achieve a high standard must, in fact, be lowering standards. Why do they not see that an exam influences a child's work habits — just as a good teacher can influence them — and thus can raise standards? The best exams are not only rigorous tests but also good teachers.

The point is underlined by James Miller, Headmaster of Newcastle Royal Grammar School and conductor of the recent survey which records the responses of heads and senior staff. "Those individuals are very experienced and, in the main, distinctly sceptical about current fads," he says. "Most of them started from a position that was strongly opposed to modular examinations."

Of course there are some snags to be ironed out. Taking too many early modules, for instance, can put undue pressure on pupils and care needs to be taken to ensure that an early exam in one subject does not disrupt a pupil's work in another. What is particularly damaging, however, is the ignorant view that modular A levels are somehow easier. In fact, the reverse is just as likely because the exam boards quite properly insist that those who take a module early will still be

judged by the standard applied to those taking that same module at the end of the course.

My English department's case is interesting because in the majority of instances it is maths and science departments which are embracing modular courses. Initially we resisted "modularity" on the ground that maturity in English is crucial. The better read a candidate is, the better he or she can respond to any question on any text.

We have also begun to appreciate that modularity makes it easier for schools to offer options within courses, a facility which encourages pupils' motivation.

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judged by the standard applied to those taking that same module at the end of the course.

three years running, we have certainly not made this switch through dissatisfaction with the grades our candidates have been achieving by the traditional route.

Not only are the main arguments against modular A levels thus quite unfounded, they are also motivated by assumptions about falling standards as a whole.

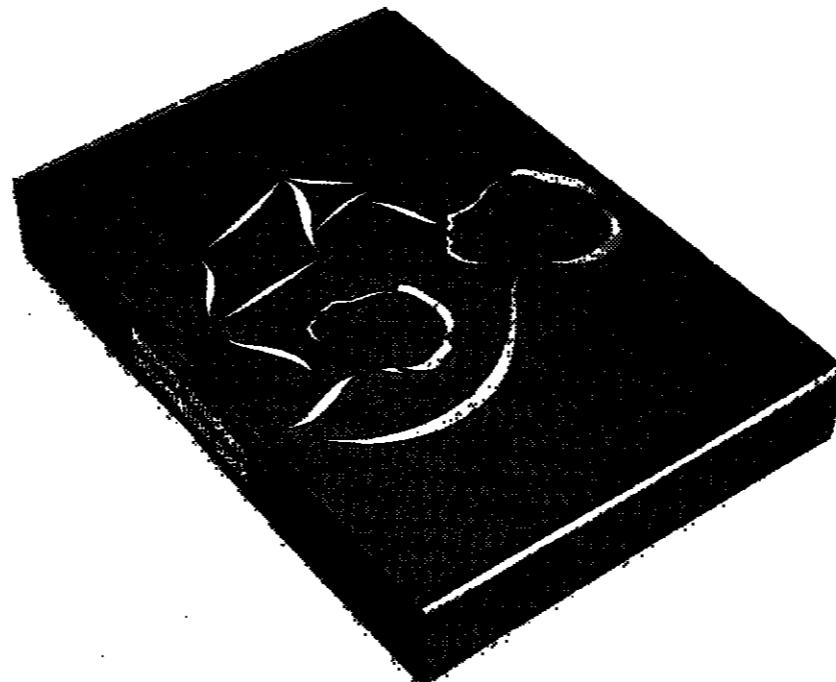
For three good reasons those assumptions are misplaced, despite what the impending government inquiry report on A-level standards is going to tell us.

First, children know better than ever that the world is more competitive. Good grades are necessary to reach desired destinations. Secondly, each year the examinees are increasingly the children of parents who themselves took higher examinations. At home there is greater awareness of the support needed for examination success.

Finally, teachers are better equipped to help, guide and motivate their pupils. For instance, choosing the right A-level subjects was once a very haphazard affair and quality careers advice almost non-existent. All that has largely changed and is improving all the time. In the classroom, too, there has been change, stimulated by improved exams, in an effort to get the best out of our children. Modular exams are just one source of such stimulation.

• The author is head of English at Malvern College.

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Conduct of employer's undertaking

Regina v Associated Ocel Co Ltd

Before Lord Mackay of Clashfern, Lord Charnwood, Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle, Lord Musul and Lord Hoffmann

[Speeches November 14]

It was a question of fact in each case whether an activity, which caused a risk to the health and safety of persons not in its employment, amounted to part of the employer's "conduct of his undertaking" within the meaning of section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

The House of Lords so held in dismissing an appeal by Associated Ocel Co Ltd, against the dismissal by the Court of Appeal (The Times August 3, 1994 (1995) ICR 28), of its appeal against conviction on March 19, 1993 at Chester Crown Court (Judge Prosser, QC and a jury) of failing, contrary to section 3(1)(a) of the 1974 Act, to discharge the duty imposed by section 3(1) to conduct its undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, that persons not in its employment were not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

Section 3 of the 1974 Act provides:

"(1) It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety."

Mr Raymond Walker, QC and Mr Julian Waters for Ocel; Mr

Hugh Carlisle, QC and Mr Ian Burnen for the Crown.

LORD HOFFMANN said that Ocel operated a large chemical plant at Ellesmere Port which was shut down in June 1990 for annual maintenance. A small firm of specialist contractors, Resin Glass Products Ltd ("RGP") was engaged in repairing the lining of a tank.

RGP's employee, Mr Cuthbert, was working in the tank by the light of an electric light bulb attached to a lead. He had to grind the damaged area of the lining, clean it down with zirconia and then apply a fibreglass matting patch with resin. The actions was in an old paint bucket and while he was applying it with a brush the light bulb broke causing a flash fire in which Mr Cuthbert was badly burned.

Ocel was prosecuted for breach of section 3(1) of the 1974 Act. The Crown said that the failure of duty was a failure to control the works so as to ensure that persons not in Ocel's employment, Mr Cuthbert was employed by RGP, were not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

RGP operated under a "permit to work" system which meant that for every job they had to fill in a form saying what they were going to do and obtain authorisation from Ocel's engineers, who would consider what safety precautions were needed.

The whole plant was designated by the Executive as a "major hazard site" and the permit to work was part of a statement of safety procedures which Ocel was obliged to draw up and submit to the Executive.

That was the ground of appeal to the Court of Appeal was that the judge had been wrong to reject its submission of no case to answer.

KELLY v BASTIBLE AND OTHERS
Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Waller
Judgment November 11

When considering under section 33 of the Limitation Act 1980, whether to disrupt the limitation provisions where there is a claim to be brought and when weighing the prejudice to a defendant who was insured, the correct approach was to treat the defendant and the insurer as a composite unit, even in circumstances where the plaintiff would have no claim against his solicitor if the claim were not allowed to proceed.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an appeal by the defendants, John Bastible, James Patrick Bastible and Gordon Arthur Kimble, executors of the estate of Dr Christopher Bastible deceased, against a decision of Mr Justice Wright to allow a claim by the

plaintiff, Dean John Kelly, for damages for medical negligence to proceed out of time.

Mr Nigel Baker, QC and Mr Simon King for the plaintiffs; Mr Piers Ashworth and Ms Fiona Sinclair for the defendants.

LORD JUSTICE WALLER said that in relation to the question of evidential prejudice or considering whether or not there could be a fair trial the approach of considering the insurers and defendant as a composite unit had always to be the right approach.

It was always right in weighing the prejudice to one side against the prejudice to the other for the judge to recognise whether or not the plaintiff had an alternative remedy against his solicitor and he would, as a matter of reality, be aware that the defendant was insured.

However, if the conclusion had been that treating the defendant and insurer as a composite unit the

Crown adduced evidence, by way of advance rebuttal of a defense, that prevention of the accident had not been "reasonably practicable", showing that the permit to work system had been operated in a perfunctory manner.

Ocel had supplied Mr Cuthbert with protective clothing and a face mask but did not supply a special air lamp, which could have been specified on the standard form, or a closed container for the acetone or forced air extraction for the tank.

At the close of the prosecution case, Mr Walker submitted that there was no case to answer. RGP were independent contractors and the cleaning of the tank was part of the conduct of their undertaking. Control was essential to liability under section 3(1) and Ocel had no right to control the way in which its independent contractors did their work.

Judge Prosser had rejected that submission. He said that Ocel's undertaking was the chemical business which it conducted on the site and that included having the tank repaired, whether by contractors or employees.

After that ruling Ocel closed its case without calling evidence. In summing up the judge directed the jury that Ocel conducted its undertaking by having the tank repaired by RGP and that Ocel had called no evidence that it had not been reasonably practicable to take appropriate precautions. The judge convicted.

On Ocel's ground of appeal to the Court of Appeal was that the judge had been wrong to reject its submission of no case to answer.

That seemed to his Lordship to be a confusion of thought. If the employer engaged an independent contractor to do work which formed part of the conduct of the employer's undertaking he had to stipulate for whatever conditions were needed to avoid risks to people's health and safety and which were reasonably practicable.

He could not, having omitted to do so, say that he was not in a position to exercise any control. That was precisely why Ocel insisted that its contractors adhere to the permit to work system.

The concept of control as one of the tests for vicarious liability served an altogether different purpose. An employer was free to engage either employees or independent contractors.

If he engaged employees, he would be vicariously liable for torts committed in the course of their employment. If he engaged independent contractors he would

delay had severely prejudiced their ability to defend, and if the court would not have allowed that action to continue if the defendant had not been insured, taking into account at that stage the fact that the plaintiff had no claim against his solicitor if he was not allowed to proceed with his claim, the weight to be given to the mere fact that the defendant was insured ought to be right.

It was always right in weighing the prejudice to one side against the prejudice to the other for the judge to recognise whether or not the plaintiff had an alternative remedy against his solicitor and he would, as a matter of reality, be aware that the defendant was insured.

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Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Waller
Judgment November 11

When considering under section 33 of the Limitation Act 1980, whether to disrupt the limitation provisions where there is a claim to be brought and when weighing the prejudice to a defendant who was insured, the correct approach was to treat the defendant and the insurer as a composite unit, even in circumstances where the plaintiff would have no claim against his solicitor if the claim were not allowed to proceed.

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Windfall reveals lottery of how sports bodies are run

WHILE the Sports Council of England was yesterday belatedly announcing the availability of a \$40 million National Lottery package for sports federations, coaches and competitors... in preparation for leading events and especially the Olympic Games, the future structure of British sport administration was being seriously questioned.

Lord MacLaurin, the man appointed to beat some sense into it, the chairman of Tesc and chairman of the new, but as yet dormant, United Kingdom Sports Council, spoke of the situation remaining "thoroughly unsatisfactory". Professor Peter Radford, the executive chairman of the British Athletic Federation, while he welcomed the initiative yesterday, stated that the relative positions of the UK body and the old England Sports Council was "upside down".

"It's good to have all this money going into sport," Lord MacLaurin said yesterday, "but it clearly shows that things are still being handled

The effect of new funds, David Miller says, is jeopardised by out-dated administration

by the old Sports Council, which should have been out of operation a year ago. This should have been the work of the UK Council."

The plan by which the UK body, which has yet to have a formal meeting more than a year after its formation, is dependent on the four regional

bodies (England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland) for its funding, might have been devised by the cartoonist Emmett. Lord MacLaurin admits that he is exasperated by the bureaucracy and the delays in getting the new policy determining body into action.

"I've not been in government work in this way before," he said. "It's frustrating and very different from my everyday existence. We were to have operated from January this year, and now I suppose it will be January next year."

"If you were looking at the structure of British sport as a business, you would have a holding board and executive directors. It would have been best if we'd sat down before the present structure was formulated. The UK council has representatives of the four regional bodies, plus the British Olympic Association and others, and is the stron-

gest body of sports people in the country. If I was in charge, I'd give the [major] responsibility to that body, tell them to get on with it. If they didn't succeed, they'd be fired."

What the leader of one of Great Britain's most successful chain stores does not appreciate is the extent to which the regional councils are not in the business of improving British sport, but in castle-building on public money and protecting sinecures.

"I can fully understand the frustration of sports people," Lord MacLaurin said before the funding announcement yesterday, which is in effect a vast blanket-bath in which there will be enormous waste through indiscriminate awards. Lord MacLaurin is conscious that the UK council will lack the budget-power to make things work in those areas which it considers require priority.

He is optimistic that a meeting this week with Ian Sproat, the Minister for Sport, and the four regional councils may perhaps accelerate the action. The problem with the announcement yesterday is that the allocation of funds will not become operative until next year, too late to make much impact upon the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000; certainly too late for athletes struggling to make ends meet in their preparation for the world indoor championships in March.

Radford, who attended the cash launch yesterday, was pleased with the adjustment of lottery policy, permitting funding for preparation as well as structural facilities, but insisted: "We've got to get the system right. We are still talking parochially, and it is going to hurt us. We need to plan and think on a UK basis. The UK council should lead."

Sir Rodney Walker, the chairman of what was yesterday still calling itself the Sports Council, claimed that 4,500 competitors would benefit from the funding, though he admitted: "It's not a quick fix but long term." The first cheques will not be sent out until next February.

BAF opposed to means testing

By JOHN GOODBODY

BRITISH competitors and officials yesterday welcomed the \$40 million annual package of National Lottery money that will help them in their preparation for Olympic Games and international events.

However, the British Athletic Federation (BAF) said that it would be arguing with the Sports Council that the lottery money, which has been earmarked for training, travelling, coaching and living expenses, should not be "means tested".

Professor Peter Radford, the BAF executive chairman, said that it would be argued that the lottery money, which has been earmarked for training, travelling, coaching and living expenses, should not be "means tested".

Details of the scheme were announced yesterday after the

Government changed the lottery regulations in April to allow revenue as well as capital funding.

Radford said that he was delighted that the money will be worth an average of £15,000 for 4,500 competitors over a range of sports. However, he was concerned that it would become available only next March, with six months' post-Olympic preparation time being lost.

However, he said: "All athletes should have the ability to accept this money. For some to be given the opportunity and others not would be divisive in all teams. Competitors who do not receive the money will say, quite rightly: 'Why should I help the national team? Who is helping me?'

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CRICKET: UNCAPPED MEMBER OF TOURING PARTY WILL NOT LET ENGLAND DOWN

MARK THOMPSON / ALLSPORT

New man sure to make most of opportunity

Simon Wilde meets Chris Silverwood, the Yorkshire seamer, as he prepares for the trip to Zimbabwe

When a new face comes onto the international sporting stage, it is easy to imagine its owner as fresh to the world and forget the hours of solitary practice, the setbacks and the penalty that led him or her from darkness into light.

So it is with Chris Silverwood, the only uncapped member of the England cricket team that leaves for Zimbabwe later this month. Of course, we think, it is all happening to him for the first time: he is only 21, looks 18 and is going on tour just for the experience.

In fact, Silverwood has experienced quite a lot already, having been on the uncertain road to the top for ten years now. Cricketing life began for him with bumpy Friday night rides in a minibus from Garforth comprehensive, his school in Leeds, to net sessions in Pontefract, an enthusiastic teacher being convinced that he deserved encouragement. The weekly journeys continued throughout four winters.

At Pontefract, Silverwood came under the eye of John Pearson, then working as a cricket coach for Leeds leisure services and now a regional development officer with Yorkshire. "What I first noticed about Chris was that he was far bigger than the other boys of his age, so I immediately put him into a net with some older ones," Pearson said.

"The next thing that struck me was his absolute will to succeed. When he accomplished one thing, all he wanted to know was 'What do I do next?'

Pearson was responsible for Silverwood moving clubs from his native Kippax to Castleford, who played in the Yorkshire League; and, for a 15 year-old up against men, he acquitted himself well.

Silverwood left school at 16 and went to Headingley on a Youth Training Scheme, but, for some reason, was not given a trial with the Yorkshire Schools team. However, he was also attending the Yorkshire Academy, in Bradford, where Pearson also coached and kept

his spirits up. "I'm not the only one to have helped him, but he usually came back to me when things were not going so well," Pearson said.

Within two years, Silverwood was making his Yorkshire debut, but there were to be further setbacks. When the 1990 season began, he was still not an established member of the side and was stung to be omitted from Yorkshire's opening championship match.

His response was typical. "One thing about this," he told friends at the time, "once I do get in, they won't get me out again." He was right: he soon took five wickets in a one-day match and, from there, there was no looking back. He finished the summer with 47 wickets at 36.68 each and outbowled all his fellow seamers, including Darren Gough, who stands ahead of him in the England pecking order.

Silverwood readily acknowledges his debt to Pearson, but he also received unstinting support from his mother. His parents separated when he was four, since when he has seen little of his father, but his mother has turned her hand to countless jobs to help her son to fulfil his potential. When Pearson gave him lifts home after nets, Silverwood invariably asked to be dropped off at the chip shop in Kippax, where she worked in the evenings.

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While he has attracted headlines for the unusual aspects to his life — being a black belt at karate and a teetotaller, for instance — it is the way that Silverwood embraced the years of mundane learning, and took the most out of them, that is impressive. He has worked hard on his fitness in Cape Town over the past three winters and at home recently, and now has greater stamina and an extra zip to his bowling.

Silverwood attributes his advance this year to all the work that went before. "I think I have matured," he said during England's training camp in Portugal last week. "I have learnt to cope with situations and know now when to bowl line and length." In days past, he was inclined to spray the ball around, but he rejects the notion that he is a willing foil for more explosive fast bowlers operating at the other end — "I see myself as just as dangerous as Dominic Cork or Darren Gough."



Silverwood was the pick of the Yorkshire seamers during the summer

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He also knows that the hard work is far from over. Limited though his opportunities may be this winter, he knows he can only benefit. "He is a thinking bowler," Pearson said. "He has worked out how to get his wickets in the past, and I'm sure he will do that for England. No doubt on tour he will listen to advice, but he will sort out for himself what works and what doesn't."

Glamorgan appoint Fletcher as coach

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

GLAMORGAN have appointed Duncan Fletcher, the South African, as their coach for next summer. Fletcher will take up the post at the end of the South African season and will be with Glamorgan until September 16, when he will resume his present position with Western Province.

"I have agreed a one-year contract with a provisional arrangement for a second year," he said. "They approached me and it has been a long-held ambition of mine to coach in Britain."

Fletcher, who was born in Zimbabwe, is widely regarded as the best provincial coach in

South Africa. He was with the team on their tour of England in July and August when they defeated Glamorgan in three days.

Warwickshire are investigating reports that Allan Donald could miss the start of next season because South Africa's domestic knock-out cup competition continues to the end of April. This could lead to a tug of war between Free State, Donald's province, and his English county, who say that he is contracted to be at Edgbaston from April 1.

Dennis Amiss, the Warwickshire chief executive, said: "We have spoken to his agent and he is attempting to

clarify the situation as soon as

he can contact Allan in India, where he is on tour. Allan has signed a contract with us and we would like him to honour that."

Matthew Hart, the all-rounder, has been recalled to the New Zealand party for the tour of Pakistan. Hart, 24, who has played in 14 Tests, was a surprise omission from a 26-man New Zealand training squad named in August, but he has been called up because of a hand injury to Mark Haslam, the left-arm bowler. Hart will leave for Pakistan today, surprised by his sudden elevation. "I was totally stunned," he said.

New Zealand are in Sharjah at present, need to improve their performance dramatically if they are to stop a confident Pakistan in the final of the Singer Champions' Trophy tournament today.

The tournament has provided the New Zealanders — who are flying straight to Pakistan afterwards for a Test and a one-day series — an ideal warm-up to build a strong combination for the tough battles ahead. Steve Rixon, the New Zealand coach, said:

Paul Adams, the South African left-arm wrist spin bowler, took four wickets for 68 on his return for Western Province after a three-month injury lay-off in their SuperSport Series four-day match against Boland at Newlands yesterday.

SWIMMING

Snelling to get food for thought

By CRAIG LORD

SIX weeks into his job as Great Britain's first national performance director, Deryk Snelling is about to be baptised into a domestic competition scene that he hopes will provide the pillars to prop up his theory for making champions.

The theory is simple: take a dozen or so internationals, nurture their talent and provide them with scientific back-up and the lifestyle grants needed for full-time "professional" athletes, then watch them float into the top ten in the world. The juniors will aspire to the new standard and rise accordingly.

For the next three days, the St Margaret's Baths, Leicester, plays host to the first of four qualifying rounds of the Speedo British grand prix, the final of which will be held in Sheffield next May.

One of the leading swimmers on view will be Adam Ruckwood, the Commonwealth champion at 200 metres backstroke. Ruckwood went to the Olympic Games as an outside medal hope, but failed to make the final.

After Atlanta, he took a two-month break before discussing with Mike Hepworth, his new coach, what had gone wrong. Ruckwood believed that his programme had changed in the year before Atlanta, when Tim Jones had been coaching him. The aim now is to return to some of the work that helped him in 1995 and before. He is hoping for a solid two-minute swim this weekend when his rivals will include Neil Willey and Adrian O'Connor.

Whereas Ruckwood will have plenty of competition, many of the best will not, an issue that will give Snelling food for thought. For instance, the only real challenge in Britain to Susan Ropof at sprint freestyle is Karen Pickering, who prefers to race in district events until the national championships. Such decisions mean that the grand prix fails to provide the tough racing that it was designed to produce.

Olympic competitors such as Jamie Hickman, Mark Foster and Paul Palmer will be absent this weekend. All three prefer to train away from the limelight and, when they race in December, they will not have been race-tested for five months.

SPORTS LETTERS

Rugby must seize opportunity

From Mr S. E. Turner

Sir, By the time this rugby union season is completed, it appears that the northern hemisphere countries will have wasted almost two complete seasons in the aftermath of the 1995 World Cup. During that time, the much vaunted Super 12 series, a logical progression from the Ranfurly Shield and Currie Cups, has been launched in the southern hemisphere. In direct contrast, all that has been achieved on the other side of the equator has been a shambolic and illusory approach to the onset of professional rugby.

Yours etc
S. E. TURNER,
Glenrose, Gordon Road,
Curridge, Hampshire.

From Mr R. B. Callaghan

Sir, The present dispute between English clubs and the Rugby Football Union (RFU) is not the first time that the RFU finds itself challenged. The first time was 100 years ago with its disagreement with the Northern Union which eventually spawned the English game is developing and honing the skills of the various foreign imports in the teams, to the detriment of many young English players (if there is any doubt, just look at English cricket). Therefore, the desire of the clubs to play matches against touring teams is not driven by altruistic desire to improve playing standards for the national team, but is merely a commercial necessity.

There is one basic truism which the administrators and senior clubs in England seem to have forgotten, namely that international rugby is the lifeblood of the game. The trend towards establishing super clubs ignores the fact that the newly established English game is developing and honing the skills of the various foreign imports in the teams, to the detriment of many young English players (if there is any doubt, just look at English cricket).

The RFU's insatiable split-the-union plan through trying to stop the players being recompensed for loss of a day's earnings. Now, it is trying to control players whose earnings will be £25,000-50,000 and within ten years the top players will be in the £1 million per year bracket.

Sir John Hall is portrayed as the villain in the pack, but is a man of vision, as is Rupert Murdoch, one of the major backers of sport worldwide. All they are trying to do is pay the players as every other sport in the world does. This is something the RFU has steadfastly refused to allow.

The RFU created rugby league through its authoritarian attitude and rugby league, with its superb attributes, eventually forced the union code to turn professional.

The RFU says it is concerned about the amount of money that will be available for the smaller clubs. The thousands of pounds it is paying Sir Tom Bell to defend the stance it has taken would have been very helpful to smaller clubs.

Events are moving too quickly for the amateurs of Twickenham and it is time for them to stand aside and let the men of vision take the sport into the 21st century — or will they desperately try to cling to power for another 100 years?

Yours sincerely,
R. B. CALLAGHAN,
92 Marlpit Lane,
Coulson, Surrey.

Cricket takes harsh stance

From Mr R. T. Drane

Sir, Viewing recent events from a completely detached position, I cannot help contrasting in my mind the treatment of problem players in our two leading sports, football and cricket.

Leaving aside the manner in which problems come to light (voluntary disclosure, media probing, routine testing, etc.) what appears to happen in football is that club and governing body rally to support the player by continuing to pay him handsomely, offering counselling, advice, loyalty and even rehabilitation into the national team.

Contrast this with the case of Ed Giddins, the former Sussex cricketer. I have admired him as an excellent cricketer with a seemingly ideal sporting temperament. Not having made the breakthrough into representative cricket — although, in my view, close to doing so — he was modestly remunerated compared with footballers. He was by no means addicted to drugs, but an isolated lapse that had an effect on his sporting performance has resulted in the cancellation of his playing contract with Sussex and a ban from first-class cricket until 1998.

A promising career has thus been damaged and a likeable person deprived of his living. Why is there no place for loyalty, forgiveness and rehabilitation in cricket?

Yours sincerely,
R. T. DRANE,

92 Marlpit Lane,
Coulson, Surrey.



Motto at half cock

From Professor Emeritus

Herbert H. Hudley

Sir, Lynne Truss's "Latin lesson" (November 5) prompts one who has written both on Latin and on heraldic mottoes to respond.

It would require great effort to devise a more feeble motto than *Audire est facere*.

1. The meaning is about as gripping as "torture is to inconvenience".

2. A heavy verb (*audire*) is balanced by a light one (*facere*).

3. The infinitive endings (*est*, *are*) though identical in spelling, sound quite differently.

I suggest that Tottenham Hotspur make their motto as good as their football at its best. Why not go for the simple *Audenda*. (By daring: one would supply the thought "victory is achieved". If three words is not too verbose, one could adopt Virgil's half-line "Audientes fortuna uiva".) Fortune aids those who dare.

Yours sincerely,
H. H. HUXLEY,
12 Derwent Close, Cambridge.

Suicidal tactics

From Mr Peter Harder

Sir, As Gavin Stewart hints in his article on the 1987 Boat Race (Features, November 12), poor journalism ensured that the fictionalisation of the events surrounding the race had begun well before the crews left the start.

As for the result, he (presumably) understood, as stroke of the winning crew glosses over the effects of the extraordinary weather conditions on the day. Oxford won, not through remittent courage and cussedness, but (rightly) employing tactics which, on any other day, would have been race suicide: heading for the calm water at the side of the river.

Had Cambridge joined them 30 seconds earlier, they would not have been so waterlogged that no amount of pulling could retrieve their position.

Yours faithfully,
PETER HARDER,
(Cambridge University Boat Club secretary, 1986-87),
29 Villiers Street, WC2.

Recorded catch

From Mr Lynn Hughes

Sir, I must correct Brian Clarke on a detail in his article on record catches (November 4). Some years ago, I was invited to read in her own schoolgirl hand, Georgina Ballantine's first-hand account (in the library at Glenmore Vale) of her marathons struggle with that 64lb British record salmon and the story is somewhat different.

It had been coaching him. The aim now is to return to some of the work that helped him in 1995 and before. He is hoping for a solid two-minute swim this weekend when his rivals will include Neil Willey and Adrian O'Connor.

Whereas Ruckwood will have plenty of competition, many of the best will not, an issue that will give Snelling food for thought. For instance, the only real challenge in Britain to Susan Ropof at sprint freestyle is Karen Pickering, who prefers to race in district events until the national championships.

Such decisions mean that the grand prix fails to provide the tough racing that it was designed to produce.

At a time when players' wages were capped and professional football was regarded as socially and collectively inferior to rugby union, he brought an original dignity, style, wit and respect off the field alongside his skillful playing talents.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD GRAYSON,
9-11 Bell Yard, WC2.

advocate and judge, Lord Birkenhead. When the BBC attempted to intrude upon his privacy in *This Is Your Life*, he walked off stage sensationally.

When he exposed football's growing problems in a regular newspaper column, Arsenal banned him from the press box. He inspired all generations with his leadership at all levels. We shall never see his like again.

Yours faithfully,
CHRIS LANGLEY,
54 Goldcroft,
Henfield, Hertfordshire.

Langley's law

From Mr Chris Langley

Sir, The universal astonishment at the outcome of the world heavyweight boxing championship bout last weekend has led me to formulate the following law:

When all the experts are agreed about the likely outcome of a forthcoming event, it would be unwise for the non-expert to fail to rush down to his bookmaker and put his life savings on the opposite result.

Yours faithfully,
CHRIS LANGLEY,
54 Goldcroft,
Henfield, Hertfordshire.

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE CHANCERY DIVISION JOHN

RACING: IRISH TRAINER AIMS FOR REPEAT SUCCESS IN CHELTENHAM SHOWPIECE

O'Brien retraces familiar highway

By JULIAN MUSCAT

MICHAEL O'BRIEN died Anabatic for the voyage from Co Kildare to Cheltenham two days ago, his bid would almost certainly have embarked on a journey in own. Exactly 16 years later, the trainer sent his winning chaser, Bright Highway, on the same track — the gelding returned me an emphatic winner of a Mackeson Gold Cup.

The future harboured hopes in promise. O'Brien was a reigning champion jockey in Ireland while Bright Highway was the team incarnate with the world at his feet. Three weeks later, an authoritative victory in the Hemmey Gold Cup saw Bright Highway installed clear favourite for the Blue Riband at Cheltenham.

He never made it: the horse was out schooling when a tendon slipped clean off his foot. It was a shocking acci-

dent; yet no man could have better comprehended the travesty than O'Brien himself. He has been confined to a wheelchair ever since, a debilitating fall in South Carolina in 1974.

"The thing with Bright Highway was a cruel disappointment for us," O'Brien, 53, recalled earlier this week. "He was already the best horse around at the time — and he was only six."

Before his accident, Michael O'Brien was the best jump jockey in the United States — and he was only 30. "He was the most competitive man in the saddle," said his brother, Leo, a weighing-room contemporary of Michael's and now operating successfully as a trainer based in New York. "I was riding for a bigger outfit with better horses, but he beat me to the championship on determination alone. He would have been champion 15 years in a row if he hadn't had that fall."

It is hard to detect such

overtures within Michael's conversation. We must be thankful for that; his love of training, much in evidence, has allowed him to drive out the demons. There is no trace of bitterness — much less regret — about the loss of a physically active life. If he is

for the Carolina Cup," Leo

recalled, "when Michael asked me to have a look at his horse. He said it didn't feel right. Well, the horse jogged fine and looked perfectly sound, but Michael was unusually anxious."

"So we were riding together

near the third fence, both of us

towards the rear, and I kept

looking across at Michael's

horse. Of course, I had to look

at the fence as we approached

it and the next thing there was

this merciless crash! The horse

had had a heart attack. I

looked over at Michael and he

was in the air, coming down.

He landed on the point of his

neck and I heard it snap like a

mallet. Then another horse

jumped the fence and landed

with one of his feet on Michael's chest. He had no

chance at all."

Nevertheless, Leo's account of that fateful afternoon in 1974 is hypnotic — not just for its clarity of expression, but for the unbreakable bond between the two brothers. "We

were both hacking to the start

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He said it didn't feel right.

Well, the horse jogged fine and

looked perfectly sound, but Michael was unusually anxious."

Carragh and set about founding a stable. "It was pretty rough when we started," Leo said. "We built the place from scratch and expanded it to 48 boxes, and in our fourth year Michael was champion trainer in Ireland. Michael has an eye: he bought Bright Highway out of a field for small money. By then he would say that the only thing he couldn't do was walk."

O'Brien has since landed two Irish Nationals and a Triumph Hurdle in a career notable for the realism with which he campaigns his horses. That alone highlights Anabatic's chance in the Murphy's Gold Cup at Cheltenham tomorrow, although O'Brien won't be on hand to help the horse:

Anabatic, by Strong Gale, is named for the meteorological term describing the upward flow of air. Doubtless, O'Brien's soul will soar in the same direction if the eight-year-old prevails.



O'Brien braves the elements to supervise Anabatic's preparation for Cheltenham

Visor can work the oracle again for Southampton

CHELTENHAM CHANNEL 4



TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

2.25: With Southampton visted once again, he must go close. On the five occasions during the past three years when Toby Balding's runner has worn headgear after races without them he has won. That remarkable record can continue here, especially as he looks well weighted after his encouraging seasonal reappearance behind Calliope Bay at Stratford 15 days ago.

Tony McCoy, who has been on board for the six-year-old's last six victories, has ridden Lord Dorset and Captain Kheive but is sticking with Balding's chaser. Lord Dorset was a useful recruit to the chasing ranks last term and is open to more improvement than Captain Khedive (needs a fast-run race) and Konvekt King.

3.00: The Irish can enjoy an early taste of Cheltenham success, courtesy of the inform Joss Little, Aidan O'Brien's runner was third in the Galway Hurdle in August and, more recently, finished a good second in a grade two race at Listowel before winning easily at Leopardstown.

Danjung has sound form credentials but, having run out at Newbury on Wednesday, he clearly has his own ideas about racing. If blinks galvanise him into action, Martin Pipe's runner is a big danger.

4.05: Stoney Valley has strong claims on last season's form, but has run badly on both outings this term. With Staunch Rival out of form and World Express best when the mud is flying, Ramsdens is the choice by default.

The course and distance winner, trained by Nigel Twiston-Davies, ran unaccountably badly when sent off favourite two weeks ago. A useful hurdler last term, he could make up into an even better chaser and oblige here.

4.05: Stoney Valley has proved a revelation since being treated

RICHARD EVANS

EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

A FREE RETURN TICKET ON EUROSTAR



HOW TO GET YOUR TICKET
Collect 18 differently numbered tokens from *The Times* and three differently numbered tokens from *The Sunday Times* (after today 7 more will be printed in *The Times* and one more in *The Sunday Times* until November 23, 1996). An application form will be published in *The Times* tomorrow with full details of how to apply for your special free ticket voucher and information pack, together with abridged terms and conditions.

Applications must be received no later than Monday, December 9, 1996. Applicants and travellers using the free ticket must be aged 18 or over. Only one application for a free ticket voucher per household is permitted. Booking must be made between December 6, 1996 and April 16, 1997 and a minimum of 10 days before the intended date of travel. Travel must be completed by April 30, 1997.

SEE PAGE 2 FOR TODAY'S EUROSTAR TOKEN

CHANGING TIMES

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1.15 COOTIE | 3.00 JUST LITTLE |
| 1.50 HUNTING LURE | 3.35 THE LAST FLING |
| 2.25 Southampton | 4.05 Ramsdens |

1.15 113143 6000 TIMES 13 (P) 6.35 (M) Mrs D Relphoe & Hall 12-0 ... B West (7)

REMOVED: 1.15 COOTIE 11-0 12-0 P - 13-0 14-0 15-0 16-0 17-0 18-0 19-0 20-0 21-0 22-0 23-0 24-0 25-0 26-0 27-0 28-0 29-0 30-0 31-0 32-0 33-0 34-0 35-0 36-0 37-0 38-0 39-0 40-0 41-0 42-0 43-0 44-0 45-0 46-0 47-0 48-0 49-0 50-0 51-0 52-0 53-0 54-0 55-0 56-0 57-0 58-0 59-0 60-0 61-0 62-0 63-0 64-0 65-0 66-0 67-0 68-0 69-0 70-0 71-0 72-0 73-0 74-0 75-0 76-0 77-0 78-0 79-0 80-0 81-0 82-0 83-0 84-0 85-0 86-0 87-0 88-0 89-0 90-0 91-0 92-0 93-0 94-0 95-0 96-0 97-0 98-0 99-0 100-0 101-0 102-0 103-0 104-0 105-0 106-0 107-0 108-0 109-0 110-0 111-0 112-0 113-0 114-0 115-0 116-0 117-0 118-0 119-0 120-0 121-0 122-0 123-0 124-0 125-0 126-0 127-0 128-0 129-0 130-0 131-0 132-0 133-0 134-0 135-0 136-0 137-0 138-0 139-0 140-0 141-0 142-0 143-0 144-0 145-0 146-0 147-0 148-0 149-0 150-0 151-0 152-0 153-0 154-0 155-0 156-0 157-0 158-0 159-0 160-0 161-0 162-0 163-0 164-0 165-0 166-0 167-0 168-0 169-0 170-0 171-0 172-0 173-0 174-0 175-0 176-0 177-0 178-0 179-0 180-0 181-0 182-0 183-0 184-0 185-0 186-0 187-0 188-0 189-0 190-0 191-0 192-0 193-0 194-0 195-0 196-0 197-0 198-0 199-0 200-0 201-0 202-0 203-0 204-0 205-0 206-0 207-0 208-0 209-0 210-0 211-0 212-0 213-0 214-0 215-0 216-0 217-0 218-0 219-0 220-0 221-0 222-0 223-0 224-0 225-0 226-0 227-0 228-0 229-0 230-0 231-0 232-0 233-0 234-0 235-0 236-0 237-0 238-0 239-0 240-0 241-0 242-0 243-0 244-0 245-0 246-0 247-0 248-0 249-0 250-0 251-0 252-0 253-0 254-0 255-0 256-0 257-0 258-0 259-0 260-0 261-0 262-0 263-0 264-0 265-0 266-0 267-0 268-0

FOOTBALL

Deal ends threat of strike by players

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

THE threat of a players' strike was finally laid to rest yesterday when the Football League agreed to make an annual payment of £1.35 million, for five years, to the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA). The money will come from the League's £125 million television agreement with BSkyB, which started this season.

The new package was voted through after a 30-minute discussion at a meeting of chairmen and representatives, from all 72 Nationwide League clubs in London. It was immediately welcomed by the PFA, which had balloted its members and received a unanimous mandate to carry our industrial action.

Brendan Batson, the deputy chief executive of the PFA, said: "Obviously, we're delighted this has been settled at last. We're disappointed it had to go this far, I don't think anyone really wanted it to, but we're pleased with all the support we have had from our members in the Football League."

The dispute involved the yearly contribution made by the League to the PFA from its television revenue. Traditionally, it had been designated as 10 per cent, but it was suddenly changed to a "discretionary" amount. The PFA, which received £560,000 from the League last year, protested strongly, with Gordon Taylor, the chief executive, adamant that he would ask the players to strike in an effort to secure a better deal.

Andy Williamson, the League secretary, said: "We're happy this saga has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It means that supporters and our commercial partners can be assured that there will be no disruption to the League programme.

"I think we were always moving towards an eleventh-hour agreement, it was always likely to be quite protracted. Everybody hoped we could have avoided all the uncertainty, but, unfortunately, that's the way things tend to develop. It is difficult for any side to claim they have won

the day. It is a compromise and both sides are now happy."

Under the terms of the new deal, the PFA will receive a £750,000-a-year down payment, with a further £600,000 a year earmarked for mutually agreed projects — coaching initiatives, youth schemes and private medical insurance.

The League has also decided to radically restructure its format, with Gordon McKeag, the League president, expected to stand down at the end of the season. The change, if agreed at an emergency general meeting of the clubs next month, will see the scrapping of the existing seven-man board, of which McKeag is chairman, and a nine-man body formed to replace it.

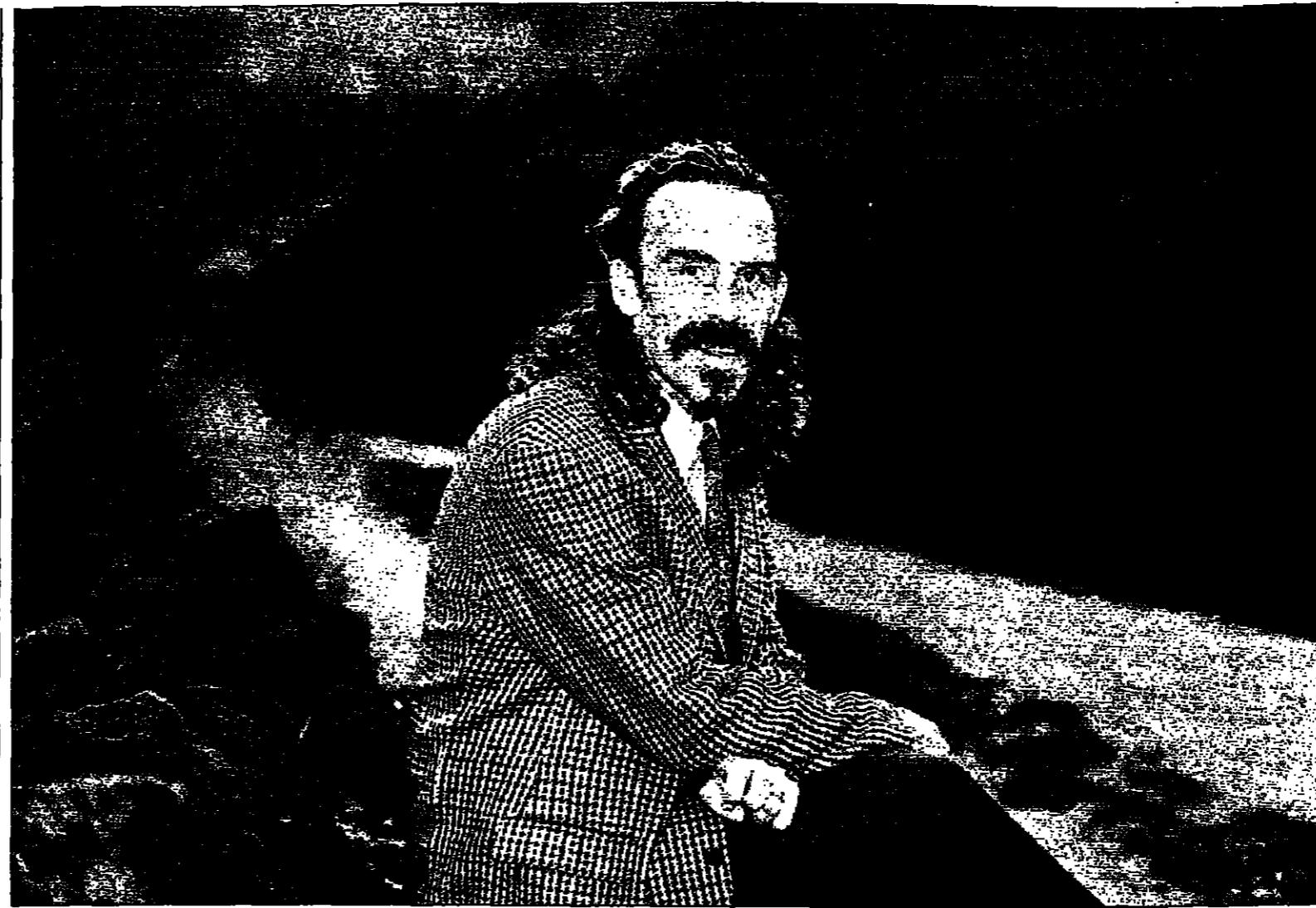
David Sheepshanks, of Ipswich Town, proposed the move, along with Ron Noades, of Crystal Palace, Jonathan Hayward, of Wolverhampton Wanderers, and Ian Stott, of Oldham Athletic. "I'm absolutely delighted," Sheepshanks said. "There were a lot of views expressed as this is a radical change."

This was started by the first division clubs, but it very quickly captured the imagination of the second and third division clubs as well. There was a very strong feeling that change had to happen."

Under the blueprint devised by Sheepshanks and his colleagues, the new ruling body will commission an independent report that will look at the structure of the League and its board.

If the clubs vote in favour of a new governing body at their emergency meeting, McKeag will relinquish his chairmanship with immediate effect. However, he will not give up his presidency of the League until next summer, after the new board has considered the findings of the report.

Debate on the matter lasted 2½ hours and there was some dissent from the gathering. However, when a vote was called for to arrange the emergency meeting, only one, unnamed, club was opposed to it.



Kilcline, now with Mansfield Town, has mellowed in appearance as well as approach as he nears the end of his colourful playing career

Giant Killer seeks one more Cup victim

Richard Hobson meets a defender with a reputation for tackling some of the game's toughest assignments

Killer Kilcline. The syllables roll off the tongue. Watch Brian Kilcline in action and clearly there is more to the nickname than a handy piece of alliteration. There always was. The Viking locks have been replaced by a ponytail and the bushy beard exchanged for a tidy goatee, but, in the rough, tough world of third division football, Kilcline remains as robust as a barn door.

These days he is the elder statesman for Mansfield Town, a towering figure in every sense. At 34, he is three years older than Steve Parkin, the manager. Few would say it to his face, evident though it may be, but Kilcline is nearing the winter of his career. The highlight is obvious, enshrined on film and paper, and memories of his most glorious day are sure to be reckoned tomorrow.

Nine years ago, Kilcline joined an exclusive group of players to have lifted the FA Cup when he captained Coventry City to a 3-2 victory against Tottenham Hotspur in one of the most open, attractive finals of the past decade. It was another triumph for the underdog, the sort of result that ensures that the word "romantic" can be

used legitimately in future references.

This weekend, the Cup begins in earnest with the first round and, for Kilcline, it means a tilt against Consett, of the Federation Northern League, at Field Mill. "Every year, you try to go as far as you can," Kilcline said. "In league football, you cannot really get away with saying you take each game as it comes because it sounds corny, even though it is true. In the cups, there is no other way. Lose one game, and you're out; but, if you lose to a smaller club, then it is even worse because there is the embarrassment as well."

While the nature of the game is changing, and defenders are expected to be proficient in more than jumping, tackling and clearing their lines, Kilcline's style has remained largely unaltered since he made his debut at Notts County as a strapping teenager, inviting the suggestion then that he must have emerged from the womb 17 years earlier with hair on his legs. He took the advice of

"I got led astray," Kilcline said, reflecting on the bad company that ultimately forced him out of Nottingham. "I did things that I wanted to do at the time, but were not appropriate in terms of building a career. Perhaps I was not ready for the commitment that needed to be made." He has learnt from the experience. "The only person I trust in life is my wife," he said.

On the field, there are plenty who have placed their faith in Kilcline. He was Kevin Keegan's first signing at Newcastle United and Keegan said recently that it was Kilcline who saved the club from relegation into the old third division.

The player admits that he is best in a "backs-against-the-wall" situation. He has also helped Coventry and Oldham Athletic away from the threat of relegation.

"Even as a school kid, I was playing for the lesser teams and getting beaten regularly," he said. "People think I get into difficult situations deliberately because I enjoy getting out of them."

Tough as nails at work, soft as grease at play, Kilcline is not the first to fit such a description. He values his privacy, but loves his football. Nothing could be better than a scrappy 2-1 win tomorrow, provided that Consett lead for most of the game.

FA CUP

Howard Wilkinson, then manager at Meadow Lane, and eschewed the chance of a career with Ireland (both his parents are Irish) to collect two England Under-21 caps. The senior call never came.

The crowning moment for Kilcline Cup Final glory

Powling plays on nerves of Brighton's troubled travellers



Powling: ambition

When a team lies rock bottom of the third division with its supporters in revolt and its directors under siege, the solitary consolation is that fate has dealt all its bad cards. Tomorrow afternoon, at a rustic ground in Suffolk, may prove that the joker has yet to be played on Brighton.

The market town of Sudbury has its attractions. There is a river, some noble old buildings and verdant countryside, but, when the beleaguered players of Brighton bump across the potholed entrance to the Priory Stadium, they can be pardoned for being blind to all this. The FA Cup has simply invited them further into purgatory.

"It is just about the best draw we could have got," Richie Powling, the manager of Sudbury Town, confirmed.

At the British Army camp in Osnabrück, next month, overcame an understandable degree of nervousness to register the best win of his fledgeling career.

White is a very frustrating experience," White said. "When things are going well and you've strung a few wins together, you're in a mould. I am out of that at the moment and I just can't seem to get involved out there."

Unlike White, Parrott, a semi-finalist at the Regal Masters and Grand Prix, has enjoyed an encouraging start to the new campaign. As such, his unusually ineffective display against Gray, 17, came as a shock to his system.

Gray, who was forced to negotiate nine qualifying rounds in order to ensure his place in the final stages of the tournament,

is at the British Army camp in Osnabrück, next month, overcame an understandable degree of nervousness to register the best win of his fledgeling career.

David is a good little player, I played awfully and a combination of the two all led to this result; I've got absolutely no excuses," Parrott said.

Mark Williams, who won the Grand Prix, highlighted a 5-2 victory over Nick Price with a 140 total clearance, and, in so doing, further endorsed his credentials as a value bet for the £70,000 first prize on offer at the UK championship, which gets under way this afternoon.

Tiptree United and Harwich and Parkstone. Then, he took his young family from their native Barking and harnessed his ambition to Sudbury. "The aim is to relocate to a new ground out of town and that is my main incentive," he said.

The Priory Stadium has been Sudbury's home since 1952, but David Webb, the club secretary, remembers watching the team play at their previous base, now the town's cricket ground. "I was born in Sudbury and I've been watching the club for 50 years now," Webb said. "I never thought we would come this far — Wembley for the Vase in 1989 and now the first round of the FA Cup for the first time."

It is not, perhaps, the cosy small-town team that Webb remembers of old. Powling,

though restricted by a budget that forces him to sell two players a year if the club is to survive, has created a team of his own. The captain is Nick Smith, once of Colchester United but now working as a postman while he trains for the police force. Recently, Powling has added Tony English, formerly the Colchester captain but, like himself, forced out of League football by a suspected knee.

These East Anglian lumiaries apart, Brighton will be confronted by the usual non-league mix, including a swimming-pool attendant and a double glazing salesman.

Though acknowledging that Sudbury's facilities, finances and following are as thin as any in the Doc Martens League, Powling claimed that their coaching, scouting and

physiotherapy are a match for any. There is character within the team, too.

Last week, protecting a 2-1 first-leg advantage in a cup-tie at Fisher Athletic, they were 5-0 down before half-time yet recovered to score four and go through on away goals. Then, on Saturday, they took an away point from Gresley Rovers, the unbeaten leaders.

Powling speaks with realism. "Nine times out of ten, Brighton will beat us comfortably," he said, "but they won't want to come here and they will find a carnival atmosphere that might just disturb them. Our normal gate is 400 and there will be ten times that many here on Saturday. With that, he dashed off to the printers to collect more tickets. The work of a non-league manager is never done."

SNOOKER: FORMER WINNERS SUFFER DEFEAT ON EVE OF UK CHAMPIONSHIP

White and Parrott fail German test

JOHN PARROTT and Jimmy White, both former winners of the United Kingdom championship, each suffered setbacks on the eve of the 1996 event when there were surprisingly defeated in the final qualifying round of the German Open at Preston Guild Hall yesterday (Phil Yates writes).

Parrott, a realistic contender for the UK title, was beaten 5-3 by David Gray, a rookie professional, while White lost 5-1 to Mark Davis, the world No 55.

After opening match defeats in the Asian Classic, Regal Scottish Masters and Grand Prix, White is devoid of confidence.

"It is a very frustrating experience," White said. "When things are going well and you've strung a few wins together, you're in a mould. I am out of that at the moment and I just can't seem to get involved out there."

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ARIEL, skippered by Ras Turner, took the honours to win the first leg of Sir Robin Knox-Johnston's Clipper '96 round-the-world race, when she crossed the finishing line off Fort Lauderdale early yesterday, enabling her crew to enjoy a hearty breakfast ashore (Edward Gorman writes).

Turner and his paying volunteers had taken 21 days and 21 minutes to complete the second half of the leg from Madeira, a distance of 3,700 nautical miles, and he looked to have beaten the nearest of his rivals by at least 24 hours. The next yacht to arrive, early this morning, is expected to be Chrysalite, skippered by Colin de Mowbray, followed by Mermenus, under Jim Thom.

Turner, a former career naval officer and Whitbread veteran from Saltash, Cornwall, was relieved to have held on to his lead after contending with torn spinnakers for much of the leg. "The light winds were very changeable in the middle and it became like a demolition derby at one stage with spinnakers tearing and a broken balyard pushing one spinnaker into the sea," he said. "Luckily, we were able to effect the necessary repairs and we are thrilled to be on dry land again."

SAILING: ARIEL CREW CELEBRATE WITH HEARTY BREAKFAST ASHORE

Turner takes honours with day to spare

In the Vendée Globe single-handed round-the-world race, Pete Goss, whose first 10 days have been hampered by the failure of his radio, yesterday managed to get it going again. He is now able to receive vital weather faxes for the first time since the start. Goss, on *Aqua Quorum*, was lying in tenth place with Catherine Chabaud, of France, on *Whirlpool-Europe 2*, back ahead of him in ninth place and making better speed in light trade wind conditions. The race leader is still Yves Parlier, on *Aquitaine Innovations*, who is 30 miles ahead of Isabelle Autissier, on *PRB*.



A very bad case of second series syndrome

Actors often complain that we, the paying public, fail to recognise the essential difference that exists between the characters they portray on screen and themselves. All I can say after last night's episode one of *Crocodile Shoes* (BBC) is that we, the paying public, have a point.

Does anybody know where Jimi, my Niall, actor and country music singer, begins and where Jed Sheppard, his fictional alter ego, ends? More importantly, does anybody care?

Somebody must, I suppose, for there to be a new series. New series means a new theme tune, the chorus of which has been helpfully woven into the soundtrack, presumably making it easier to walk into a record shop and ask "have you got the one that goes dee dedee, dee dedee...?" There's a new album out too, you see.

Series two began with Sheppard as an established star, which

unfortunately means that parody was rarely more than a plectrum pluck away. He rents mansions in the West Country, is stalked constantly by the paparazzi and wears sunglasses indoors. Last night we met him as he was wrestling with something called second album syndrome ("this one will show whether I've got the legs") and with a flame-haired personal assistant whose Euro-pudding accent was so bizarre that it threatened the authenticity of Niall's genuine Geordie twang. He couldn't have been faking it all these years — could he?

Niall himself gave a performance so low key that you wonder whether the director forgot to shout "action". This was acting from the school of ultra-naturalism. What this tiresomely laid-back series requires, however, is a good kick up the arse.

In terms of plot last night, his

manager was murdered, he met a nice girl from Tynemouth and somebody hit him over the head. In terms of dialogue, we had such gems as "he could hear a song thought... I mean, really hear it". Best of all we had a musical interlude — a chance for Niall to look moodily down the Tyne and sign a few autographs (his signature or Sheppard's, I wonder?) while we endured another track from the album.

It finished with the some inexplicably corrupt policemen planting two polythene bags of illegal white stuff at the rented mansion. Unfortunately, an identical incident had provided the comic basis for *The Thin Blue Line* just an hour earlier. But more of that anon.

First we must consider *The Actor's Cut* (BBC2), a programme so annoying that it knocked Brian Blessed and Mount Everest off the top of my personal hate parade. All

his working life Richard E. Grant has been selling his fey little film diaries to newspapers and all my life I've been failing to avoid them. Not having the foresight to move to a region where *The Works* was not being shown, I found last night was no different. Here we went again.

Now, pay attention because this is where it gets complicated. This was the video diary of the promo-

tional tour to plug two films and a book the latter being a compilation of all those previous diaries that plagued all those previous films — and, of course, their author and star, Grant.

In between these bouts of self-promotion, Grant's camcorder just happened — as they do — to come across all sorts of very famous people, including Trevor Nunn whose campaign to rid the profession of the word "juvie" was rendered a bloody, twitching mess by this navel-gazing nonsense.

If ever we were in doubt that here was the most delicate of eggs (Grant confessed he was haunted by a review that described his acting as "more than adequate"), the diary was followed by no fewer than four postscripts informing us — and reassuring him — that he was in work and a great success. "Do you think I'm less paranoid or more paranoid than when you first met me?" he

simpered at Winona Ryder as they cavorted in Steve Martin's swimming pool. Hmm, tough call.

Ben Elton's ego needed to be in pretty robust shape for the first series of *The Thin Blue Line* (BBC1) when, initially, at least, I appeared to be the only critic in a captivated who liked it. I still like it... but I do worry about it.

Elton's problem is that having written scripts that were too rude for any watered-down slot, does he have the dramatic wherewithal to justify this post-watershed grown-up slot? Answer yes... but probably only if you're in the right mood.

Rowan Atkinson's Inspector Fowler is a bit more Blackadder in him than he used to be. His preposterously naive in some quarters, but he can still manage a Baldrick-crushing "PC Goody" wouldn't get it if it came in a large bag marked "it" when required. Basically he's a comic

pragmatist — anything for a laugh. The supporting cast at Gasforth, nicks are as enjoyable as ever, with David Haig outstanding as DI Grim. I just hope enough people are in the right mood.

Finally, the opaquely surnamed Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall returned to Channel 4 with that television rarity, a genuinely different cookery programme, *TV Dinners*. EW, as he is known by those who value their writing space, plays a modest part in proceedings, content to let gifted amateurs have their 11 minutes of fame as they go to no end of trouble preparing extraordinary meals. Last night's host with the most was Gordon Perrier, whose hospitality and attention to detail knew no bounds. Only his guests, squabbling over who had which individually prepared pudding, let him down. No more pears in goldleaf for them.

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